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ABSTRACT

As part of Project IMPACT's efforts to identify and develop procedures for complying with the impact requirements of Public Law 94-482, a case study was made of two Illinois communities and the vocational education programs in those communities. The study examined the relationship between the "good" vocational education programs in Elwood and Walker, Illinois, and a global view of life in the communities where they are situated. The study of Elwood showed that the success of its high school vocational program derived in part from the dynamic efforts of the high school principal/vocational educator, and in part from the homogeneous values and no-nonsense approach of the town's citizens, among other factors. The town of Walker runs three exemplary vocational education programs--Experience Based Career Education (EBCE), programs for special needs learners, and a home planning and design course. Project IMPACT observed that the commitment of both the town and the vocational educators of Walker to continuously and rigorously monitor, improve, and expand vocational education offerings has been a major ingredient in the overall positive image and impact of its vocational education programs. For Project IMPACT, the case studies pointed to the need for further case studies of local vocational education programs, with resources for the investigator to live in the community and observe students and teachers as they interact. Other useful case study approaches would be multiple cases of students as they take individual courses and of classroom teachers and vocational educators who have built exemplary programs. (KC)

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DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES FOR ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (PROJECT IMPACT)

Volume 7 - Case Studies of Two Illinois School Districts with Innovative Vocational Education Programs

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
Donald F. Muirheid, Chairman

ILLINOIS OFFICE OF EDUCATION
Joseph M. Cronin, State Superintendent of Education

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Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education

Springfield, Illinois
August, 1980

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Abstract

In order to identify and develop procedures for complying with the impact requirements of Public Law 94-482, PROJECT IMPACT studied five problems: (1) how to define impact, (2) how to assess impact, (3) how to show cause and effect relationships between research and development (R&D) activities and changes in the vocational education teaching-learning situation, (4) how to predict the probability of impact, and (5) how to facilitate the impact of R&D activities. The methods used in these studies were to review and discuss views of experts and literature related to the problems and to analyze the process in vocational education in Illinois. Findings of PROJECT IMPACT's activities from August 1, 1978 to July 1, 1980 are reported in nine volumes: (1) Context and Principles of Assessing Impact, (2) A Case Study of the Illinois Occupational Curriculum Project, (3) A Case Study of the Illinois Network of Exemplary Occupational Programs for Handicapped and Disadvantaged Students, (4) A Case Study of Illinois Projects in Horticulture, (5) A Case Study of Illinois Career Education Projects at The Awareness Level, (6) A Case Study of the Occupational Survival Skills Project, (7) Case Studies of Two Illinois School Districts with Innovative Vocational Education Programs, (8) A Field Study of Predicting Impact of Research and Development Projects in Vocational and Technical Education, and (9) an Executive Summary.

Volume 7 presents a field study of two Illinois communities and the vocational education programs in those communities. This study examines the relationship between the vocational education

programs and a global view of life in the communities where they are situated. School personnel and community perceptions regarding program improvements needed in vocational education are also described.

Authors' Acknowledgements

PROJECT IMPACT is greatly indebted to the many school administrators, teachers, students and residents of Elwood and Walker who freely gave of their time to make this study possible. The authors are especially appreciative of the extensive data collection efforts of Mr. Marthell Hicks. To preserve the anonymity of these communities, it is not possible to identify all the people who made valuable contributions to this effort.

Kurt Braun

Paul Meyer

L. Allen Phelps

Table of Contents

	Page
Overview of Project Impact	7
Vocational Education Programs in Ellwood: A Case Study	12
Vocational Education Programs in Walker: A Case Study	83

Appendices

A. School District Questionnaire

B. Community Questionnaire

Overview of PROJECT IMPACT

In 1974, the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) asked the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) to assess the impact of approximately 250 million dollars spent by USOE on vocational education research and development (R & D) activities during the ten years between 1965 and 1974. The NAS committee on Vocational Education Research and Development (COVERD, 1976) reported that the R & D of the decade studies did have impact on curriculum development but did not have documented widespread impact on the knowledge, skills or employability of large numbers of students. National evaluations of vocational R & D in addition to the COVERD report have been similarly critical (Development Associates, 1975; Rand Corporation, 1975; Comptroller General of the United States, 1974). Acting upon these reports, Congress passed the Educational Amendments of 1976 (Public Law 94-482) which mandated that contracts for R & D in vocational education not be allowable unless the applicant could "demonstrate a reasonable probability that the contract would result in improved teaching techniques or curriculum materials that would be used in a substantial number of classrooms or other learning situations within five years after termination of such contracts" (Federal Register, 1977).

PROJECT IMPACT is a state funded study designed to develop procedures for assessing the impact of vocational education research and development efforts on vocational education. The primary purpose of the study is to identify and develop proced-

ures for complying with the impact requirement of Public Law 94-482.

The study addresses itself to three problem areas: (1) how to define impact, (2) how to assess impact, and (3) how to show a cause-and-effect relationship between project activities and changes in the vocational education teaching-learning situations. The study also addressed two subsidiary problems: (1) how to predict the probability of impact and (2) how to manage on-going contracts to increase impact probability.

The methods used to conduct this study were to review literature related to the problem areas, to interview individuals who have experience and expertise in the problem areas, and to analyze the process of impact of several programs of related projects which were funded by the Illinois Office of Education/Division of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education/Research and Development Section and one project funded by the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

The major activity of this study was analyzing the programs (cases) of related R & D projects. For the first year, it was decided to select two cases for "top-down" analysis and two cases for "bottom-up" analysis (see Volume 1, Appendix A, p. 43). The project staff referred to these types of retrospective analysis as "tracking." It was anticipated that the two types of tracking would produce different insights about impact. For example, bottom-up tracking might better identify "bottlenecks" to impact than would top-down tracking while "top-down" tracking might be more effective in relating project intents and project outcomes.

One staff member was assigned as "tracking manager" for each of the four cases and was instructed to keep a detailed log of her/his activities (e.g., identifying documents, retrieving documents, identifying key people and interviewing them, recording data, analyzing data).

Nominations for the first four case studies were sought from members of PROJECT IMPACT's Advisory Committee, project consultants, and project staff members. The following cases were selected for "top-down" tracking:

1. "A Research and Development Project in Occupational Education" (The Illinois Occupational Curriculum Project -- I.O.C.P.) which was developed by Joliet Junior College and funded by them and by the Illinois Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education in fiscal years 1970-72.
2. "the Illinois Network of Exemplary Occupational Programs for Handicapped and Disadvantaged Students." At the time the case study was initiated, the network was in its fourth year of operation. It was in the "dissemination" stage and IOE/DAVTE had funded Illinois State University to coordinate dissemination for the Network's eight demonstration projects.

The third and fourth cases, which were selected for "bottom-up" tracking, were:

3. "Illinois Projects in Horticulture." IOE/DAVTE funded some twelve R & D projects in horticulture between 1967 and 1978. Both private and public schools participated in these R & D efforts.

4. "Illinois Career Education Projects at the Awareness Level." IOE/DAVTE funded three or more major projects in this area between 1970 and 1978, and CETA began funding one for the Illinois Department of Corrections in 1975.

During its second year PROJECT IMPACT studied the "Occupational Survival Skills Project" and "Two Illinois School Districts with Innovative Vocational Education Programs" and developed a model for an "Impact Assessment System for the Illinois Board of Education/Department of Adult, Vocational and Technical Education/ research and Development Section."

PROJECT IMPACT's activities for the 1979 and 1980 fiscal years are reported in nine volumes. Volume 1 -- Context and Principles of Assessing Impact -- contains an introduction to PROJECT IMPACT, a review of literature and views of experts in regard to planned educational change and impact, the methods used to conduct impact case studies, a concise listing of references used during Phase 1 activities, and appended materials such as the initial project proposal and data collection instruments which were developed for use in case studies. Supplemental reports of the project are contained in the following volumes:

Volume 2 -- A Case Study of the "Illinois Occupational Curriculum Project"

Volume 3 -- A Case Study of the "Illinois Network of Exemplary Occupational Programs for Handicapped Disadvantaged Students"

Volume 4 -- A Case Study of Illinois Projects in Horticulture"

Volume 5 -- A Case Study of "Illinois Career Education Projects at the Awareness Level"

Volume 6 -- A Case Study of the "Occupational Survival Skills Project"

Volume 7 -- Case Studies of "Two Illinois School Districts with Innovative Vocational Education Programs"

Volume 8 -- A Field Study of "Predicting Impact of Research and Development Projects in Vocational and Technical Education"

Volume 9 -- Executive Summary of Volumes 1-8 and Conclusions and Recommendations for Assessing the Impact of Vocational Education Research and Development on Vocational Education

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN ELWOOD:

A CASE STUDY

Table of Contents

	Page
An Open Letter to the Elwood Vocational Staff	15
Section I - The Community and Schools of Elwood	
The Character of the Community	17
Statistics and Economic Resources	18
Additional Community Resources	21
The Schools	24
The High School	25
Section II - The Vocational Education Program	
Programs and Courses	27
Enrollment Patterns	32
Staff Values and Attitudes	35
Student Organizations	39
Interviews with Former Elwood Students	43
Peter	
Ben	
Leslie	
Mr. Campbell, the Vocational Education Director	52
Conclusions and Recommendations for Sections	
One and Two	55

Page

Section III - School and Community Views of Program Improvement

Description of the Issues 66

Special Needs

Career Education

Sex Equity/Stereotyping

Self Employment

Basic Skills

The Questionnaire 68

Rankings of the Issues 69

Additional Issues 71

Program Improvement Strategies 74

Inservice and Workshop Involvement 78

Levels of Communication 79

Appendix

A. List of Data Documents 81

An Open Letter to the Elwood Vocational Staff:

The Elwood vocational education program is unique. Perhaps all vocational programs can make this claim. Your program is unique in many ways, including the high success rate of the many students involved. Your success rate and other aspects of your program lead administrators and scholars in vocational education to look to you as leaders in the field.

The basic principle underlying this case study is that scholars, administrators and other education "experts" have much to learn from teachers. This study then represents my personal commitment (and that of Project IMPACT and its sponsors) to move beyond lip service to this principle. You will find no direct suggestions here that might help you to improve your program. The roles have been reversed and it is hoped that through this case study, administrators and scholars will find suggestions (mostly between the lines) that will help improve the quality of scholarship and administration in vocational education.

I have tried to put your program in some social context. It is my belief that education is people and that theories of learning, curriculum designs, programs and so on are tools of the education trade that are essentially for, of and by the people. As a social scientist, I was heartened by the impression that you share these feelings. I was impressed by your lack of faith in theoretical and systems approaches to teaching and learning. I was also impressed by the influence of social forces and values upon both you and your students. I fail to see how your program could be duplicated in any town save Elwood. I see Elwood as having a

general value system (with exceptions everywhere) that is consistent with many of the goals and potentials of vocational education. I think that this is a very important factor in your program and its development. I also believe that general value compatibility between vocational education and Elwood explains why vocational educators appear to admire your program so much. It is as if much of vocational education was designed for Elwood, so naturally vocational education works visibly well in Elwood.

There are many school systems which would not welcome a vocational program like yours. Many teachers in such systems are trying hard to accomplish what you have done. Many administrators and scholars schooled in vocational education are encouraging them to do the same. These fellow teachers and supporters are likely to be put off by your modesty. To them, you appear as "super" vocational educators. Your modesty reflects your understanding of the support you receive from students and Elwood and knowing that as vocational educators, you are working in an environment that values what you do. These are near optimal working conditions, and you, as members of the fortunate few that enjoy this kind of situation, are motivated and respond by doing a good and valuable job. To be sure, all is not perfect in your jobs and you work against the imperfections with frustration. Nevertheless, you know what vocational education can be and have made use of your personal and community resources to make it happen. You are to be commended.

Sincerely yours,

Kurt Braun

June 6, 1980

SECTION I: THE COMMUNITY AND SCHOOLS OF ELWOOD

The Character of the Community

Lacey County consists of something less than 650 square miles. Near the center are its two largest communities. Reston, a university town, is the largest. As one would expect, Reston is influenced both by the university with its professors, students, and support staff and a "local" population which depends on manufacturing, service, and in Reston's case, agriculture. Still, many outsiders are likely to think of the university first and the town of Reston second whenever Lacey County or Reston are mentioned.

Seven miles from Reston on State Highway 87 lies the smaller town of Elwood (population 10,000) which houses the Lacey County court house and government. State Highway 87 is a four lane road which travels through the rich agricultural land that surrounds all the small towns and cities of Lacey County. Occasionally, a business or manufacturing concern, or small residential area at the edge of Route 87 blocks the view of the soybean or corn fields. But even the fast food restaurants, occasional stop lights, and gasoline stations are unable to detract from the pastoral quality of the mid-American productive countryside. In the spring and fall, large machines roll slowly over the fields to plant, fertilize, cultivate and harvest the crops.

Just before the highway reaches Elwood, a well-kept billboard boasts of a quality community and welcomes visitors. The flatness of the fields gives way abruptly to older, well-kept homes and large shade trees protecting lawns from the summer sun. The

town's homes and yards are, for the most part, well-kept and green as are the farms and fields.

While schools and churches break up the pattern of homes on quiet streets, most of the non-residential buildings are centered in the downtown area. An old, picturesque court house sits on a lawn at the edge of the downtown area. For the most part, the downtown area--banks, stores, shops, cafes, and bars--are locally-owned establishments, many of which have been around for years. Clerks, tellers, and service people know the names and faces of most of their customers. Strangers are easily identified. Although bankers, higher-level county officials, business owners, managers, and clerks in clothing stores wear suits or dresses, other people in the downtown area dress neatly in well-kept casual clothes.

Undoubtedly, agriculture, retail sales and service and the county government affect the economy and character of Elwood. Once in town, it is difficult to realize the importance of industry. Most of Lacey County's industry is based in Reston, Elwood, and a smaller town several miles to the north. The remaining small towns of the county are influenced almost exclusively by agriculture. Because they are only a few miles apart and because they have common reliance on industry; a resident of another, smaller town in Lacey County said, "I think of Reston and Elwood as just one place."

Statistics and Economic Resources

Background statistical data which are helpful in describing the community of Elwood do not appear to be readily available

within the community itself. That is, much census, industrial, and other data seem to be collected and "banked" by agencies outside the city and county. State and federal data banks appear to be the most comprehensive, though scattered, data sources.

If one wants to know how many people live in the town in 1979, the U.S. Census Bureau is of little use. Local estimates from Chamber of Commerce sources range from just over 8,522 (1970 U.S. Census) to 11,000. The State Bureau of the Budget as cited by the Lacey County Land Use Plan (dated July, 1979) projects the 1980 population of Elwood township at 8,985. The formula for the projection is now known. It appears that the State Bureau of the Budget has the most comprehensive (projected) population data for the county broken down into townships. While this seems to be the best population data source, there seems to be no logic which would steer a researcher to the Bureau ahead of other sources such as the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, or other state agency.

Fortunately, the Lacey County Planning Department recently compiled statistics from a variety of sources to prepare a county land use plan. This was the best source of descriptive statistics on the county and the town available during this study.

"The Lacey County Land Use Plan" quite rightly pointed to the existence of the University in Reston as the largest problem in interpreting county data. This is especially true for a community like Elwood which is, in many ways, outside the influence of the university. For example, there seems to be no township break-down of age distribution for the county. Normally one would simply

rely on the county data. The existence and activities of the university also color county data on education levels, income, part-time employment, etc. Ultimately the existence of the university dramatically reduces the utility of county data for inferences about Elwood Township characteristics.

Data presented in the Land Use Plan that are broken down into townships frequently yield interesting information. For example, statistical data suggest that Elwood is second only to the (much larger) city of Reston in many areas. These include population, retail sales and housing. While Elwood accounts for 13 percent of the population of Lacey County, it accounts for 21 and 14 percent of the county's retail sales and number of homes respectively.

The only other data base in the Land Use Plan which gives specific township information is a table of manufacturers employing at least 75 workers. In this category, Elwood has, on a population basis, a disproportionately large number of employers and employee slots. Reston includes just over 50% of the county's population. Elwood claims about 12%. Of Lacey County's approximately 6,500 job slots in manufacturing concerns which employ at least 75 workers, Reston and Elwood account for 30% and 33% respectively. Of course, many of these persons may be commuting from outside Elwood. Nevertheless, these data also support the notion that Elwood is a particularly healthy and thriving community. The existence of this number of firms and employment slots is likely to also be of benefit to the high school cooperative education program.

Additional quantitative data on the relative health of the Elwood community is surely available. It is questionable whether or not it would be cost beneficial to attempt to collect additional data of this sort. A table of quantitative data comparing indices of living and working standards in Elwood relative to the county, state and nation might be very helpful in documenting the nature of the community in which Elwood High School exists.

Additional Community Resources

Qualitative data and impressions tend to support the quantitative data with respect to the benefits of living in the community of Elwood. Interviews provide examples. One teacher revealed that he had lived in Elwood for seven years, commuting to a job in a school outside of Lacey County before he was hired by the local school board. He stated that the quality of the community and the schools (he has children of school age) were the two most important factors which made him decide to live in Elwood while working elsewhere.

A long time resident and school superintendent in a nearby town stated that people outside Elwood will usually volunteer two praises for the community. First, "It is a nice place to live," and secondly, "It has good schools." When pressed for what it was about schools that people liked, he stated that the schools have high quality in both academic and vocational programs.

The state university at Reston is an additional resource for Elwood. Many of the local professional people grew up in Elwood or neighboring communities, and obtained their college education in nearby Reston. In addition, a number of professors live in

Elwood, presumably to escape from the more urban pace of a university town. It would be easy to overestimate the influence of the university on Elwood. Apparently, most citizens see Elwood as a quiet and stable community that lacks both the urban problems of the larger community of Reston and the urbanity of the university community--including students. With the important exceptions of professors and a few other professionals who reside in Elwood, most Elwood people limit their contact with the university to taking courses, but do not really involve themselves in university life.

Schools constitute yet another resource for Elwood. People who know Elwood, but who do not live there, citizens of other small towns in Lacey County and neighboring counties, say that Elwood is a nice community with good schools. Local employers, when they need to recruit qualified persons from outside the local area, will mention the schools as a means of attracting people to their firms. The local weekly newspaper devoted a large part of its energies and space to Elwood's schools in general and to the high school in particular.

Elwood has a large variety of jobs available for its work force. The largest employer in the area is the university in Reston. In Elwood there are eight manufacturing firms which employ over seventy-five workers. The largest of these employs just over 500 workers, but the average is a bit below 250. Most of the rest of the economy is divided among the county offices, retail outlets, schools, construction, agriculture, wholesale trade, real estates, and finance, almost entirely locally owned and/or controlled. This

broad economic base provides the community with higher than average family income, and with a considerably lower than average proportion of families at the lower levels of income.

In addition, the community is made up primarily of white protestants. There are few first or second generation Americans. Almost every adult has a high school diploma. The local community college and the university at Reston have provided many citizens with higher education opportunities. A large proportion of the town's professionals obtained their degrees locally. Many people worked and/or lived in Elwood as they pursued their post-secondary education. Few of the town's professionals actually went "off to college." Fewer yet received the more urban-valued liberal arts education.

There is an inordinate pride and sense of community in Elwood. People who live there like to live there. While many of the young people may hunger for opportunities not available in a small town, most adults are glad to live in Elwood. Many of Elwood's adults are Elwood natives. Most of Elwood's citizenry are individually prosperous enough that leaving Elwood would present no insurmountable problem. Families have been known to move to Elwood while maintaining a job in another location until a job locally could be found at a later date. Others have accepted lower salaries in order to live and/or work in Elwood.

For most of Elwood's residents, the attraction to the place goes beyond the quiet streets, the schools, the availability of a variety of jobs. There is a sense of community. The town is viewed as belonging to its people.

In summary, Elwood is a moderately prosperous town. It is not a boom town in which there are large amounts of money waiting to be made. The town also enjoys a certain amount of cultural homogeneity that is rare in a modern and specialized nation made up of people from a variety of educational, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. The core of values for the community is very well established and though this core is rather typically American, few American communities can boast Elwood's freedom from diverse organized interests (labor unions, chambers of commerce, competing ethnic groups), which in many communities, have superseded the common interests of communities which dominated American life during the 19th century.

The general impression is of a community that is small, clean and healthy. Things look well used and well maintained. For those living in and around Elwood, the community seems in many ways ideal.

The Schools

Elwood has four elementary schools, which are spread throughout the town's residential neighborhoods. Of the elementary schools, one is only ten years old, two others are nearly thirty years old, but in good condition, and the fourth is nearly fifty years old. In recent years, the latter facility has been modernized and expanded. These K-6 schools serve from 310 to 360 students each. There is also a K-6 parochial school serving about one hundred students.

A new junior high school serves about 425 seventh and eighth grade students. The four-year high school, which serves over

900 students was built twenty years ago, and has been expanded twice since then--once about fifteen years ago and once last year. Of the 165 full time equivalent staff members in the school district, fifty-five percent have at least a Master's degree. Thirty-one percent have the maximum experience indicated on the school district's salary schedule. The annual turnover rate of staff averages about ten percent.

The 1978-79 budget reveals that there is over $4 million in the educational fund.

The High School

Elwood High School is a modern building situated on the edge of town closest to the larger city of Reston. The building faces a large parking lot. A few homes and a large, new church provide a buffer between the school and Route 87 which connects Elwood with Reston. On the other three sides of the building are parking spaces for busses, athletic fields, equipment sheds, and a greenhouse. Like the town, the high school seems to exude a wholesomeness which one would not expect to find nowadays, but which nostalgically recalls a neighborhood high school in the 40's or 50's. During class time, the gray locker-lined halls with cut stone floors look hauntingly drab, partly because they are so well protected from the spring sun. Between classes the drabness and the sense of the past gives way to an ordered confusion of youngsters moving from class to class. The flow of blue jeans, worn by both girls and boys, provides the clearest clue to a sense of the present.

The high school prides itself on high academic standards of a conservative, no nonsense variety. The vocational education component of the high school curriculum is particularly strong. Competitive sports, particularly football, are seen as important to the school's life. Music and art programs are expanding.

SECTION II: THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM

Introduction

The vocational education program at Elwood was selected for this study on the basis of its reputation as an "innovative" and outstanding program among vocational educators in the state. It is not the purpose of this study to confirm or deny Elwood's right to such a reputation, but rather to describe the program in ways which will increase the understanding of this particular program which seems to be valued highly by vocational educators. Since Elwood's reputation is in some sense part of the program, it is necessary to describe the basis for such a reputation. This description includes a short description of: each program and some special course options, staff values and attitudes, the department's enrollment patterns, student organizations (clubs), three follow-up interviews with former students, and a short description of Mr. Campbell, the vocational education director. The relationships of these factors is discussed in the summary and conclusion section.

Programs and Courses

Agricultural Education. The agriculture program at Elwood is quite extensive. Eight one-year and four one-semester courses are offered in agriculture or horticulture. Basic agriculture is offered to ninth and tenth graders. Basic horticulture is offered at all grade levels. Advanced agriculture and advanced horticulture are offered to those who have taken their respective "basic" courses. Advanced horticulture students may elect to take any or all of three one-semester courses in Greenhouse and Nursery

Management, Lawn-T f Landscaping, and Nursery and Floral Design. Advanced agriculture students may enroll in Agriculture Conservation, Electricity and Construction, a one-year course which alternates with a second one-year course entitled Agriculture Power and Machinery. In addition, a one-semester course in Agriculture Small Engines is offered to advanced students in agriculture.

In addition to the above, two experience based courses are taught. Students placed in cooperative work stations in agriculture take a course entitled simply Agriculture Related which supplements the student's work experience. Those students who actually farm their own land may receive documentation of this experience and supplementary instruction by enrolling in Farm Management.

Students in agriculture are obliged to join the school's chapter of the Future Farmers of America. The Elwood chapter of FFA gives students the opportunity to get hands-on experience in farming and farm management. The chapter owns its own farming equipment, a 40 x 80 ft. building and 45 head of sheep. The students are responsible for over 200 acres of rich farmlands representing 13 different landlords and over $30,000 per year of decisions such as choice of seeds and when to sell the harvest. One year the chapter borrowed $8,000 from a local bank with a standard security agreement. Responsibility for the chapter's farming operation is taken by students enrolled in the classes listed above. Thus, the management class makes certain decisions, secures loans, etc. while the agriculture mechanics students maintain the equipment, and so on.

Health Occupations. The "core" course, Introduction to Occupations in Health, is a one-semester course open to students with at least sophomore standing. This survey course is designed to help students to become familiar with the types of jobs available in health. A second one-semester "skills" course is also available and includes knowledge common to all health fields such as medical terminology, the metric system, body functions and structure, etc. For Juniors and Seniors, cooperative employment opportunities are available through a one-year course which includes classroom instruction about the world of health care work, familiarity with certain kinds of medical equipment and individual projects tailored to the student's interests and/or job responsibilities.

Home Economics. The Home Economics department at Elwood High School offers courses in the five areas of homemaking, housing, clothing, child care and foods. The core course, Home Economics I, is two semesters long, is open to ninth and tenth grade pupils, and surveys all five areas. It is a prerequisite to several of the other courses offered by the department. Psychology for Living, and Consumer Management, seem to be directed to students who are primarily interested in homemaking. The remaining courses take advantage of the salable nature of the skills taught. These courses include a Child Care Laboratory; Housing and Interior Design, Clothing and Textiles, and Food Management, Production and Services. A one or two-year course in Home Economics is also offered to special needs students.

Junior and senior students have the opportunity to enroll in the Home Economics Related Occupations (HERO) course offered to

cooperative education students working at a paid job in any of the five areas which make up the department. The Elwood chapter of the Future Homemakers of America is open to all students in the program and its activities are incorporated into classroom work.

Industrial Education. Ninth grade students interested in industrial-oriented occupations may enroll in the Industrial Arts Survey course. The survey course includes drafting, woods, metals and electricity. Tenth and eleventh grade students may elect one or more of four one-semester courses in woods, metals, drafting, and electricity/electronics. Eleventh and twelfth grade students may enroll in an in-school laboratory to develop marketable skills in any of these four areas. An extended campus program allows junior and senior students the opportunity to enroll in courses at a local community college or to enroll in courses taught in neighboring districts under a joint agreement. In addition, junior and senior students may elect an on-the-job experience with pay being received from a community employer. Related course units for such cooperative education students includes industrial, labor and community relations and orientation to employment and the world of work.

Business Education. Freshmen students may survey this area by enrolling in General Business. A one-half credit sophomore course, American Business, is a second survey option. Office-oriented courses include typing, office machines, shorthand and bookkeeping. Courses in office practice and a cooperative work experience with a related class allow the students to integrate a variety of related skills during their junior and senior years.

These courses also involve general office skills (which are not stressed in skill classes) such as making appointments, forms, business letters and memos, information gathering, etc.

In addition to office skills, the Business Department offers courses in marketing and business law. Frequently, the students in these classes have had bookkeeping and other office skills. A distributive education related class and cooperative work experience is offered to those bookkeeping/marketing students that are interested in sales.

Special Needs. Most of the Elwood secondary special education teachers are seen as part of the vocational staff. When students are not mainstreamed for vocational education courses, they receive remedial instruction in basic skills, independent living skills and related job skills (applying for a job, safety, etc.). In addition, the special education staff have two cooperative education programs for their students, each representing different federal funding sources (special education and vocational rehabilitation).

Experience-Based Career Education. The Experience Based Career Education (EBCE) program is for students who are interested in a career cluster that is not found in any of the five major vocational education areas. Many of these students may be expected to go on to college in diverse areas (e.g., journalism, music, photography, law). The current EBCE program is a direct outgrowth of an earlier program developed with a grant received from the state department of vocational education.

Students in the EBCE program are given a great deal of latitude in designing and carrying out their EBCE activities. The

general pattern, however, is that students explore vocational interests by working (not for pay) twenty hours or so with a local business person or professional in an area of high interest to the student. Students are given the responsibility of negotiating experiential details of their individualized program with community resource persons.

Enrollment Patterns

The information presented in this section and the accompanying tables is based on the Elwood One and Five Year Plan for Vocational Education (1978). Course enrollment projections are for the 1978-1979 school year. Appendix E contains additional data which were extracted from the 1978 Plan. Table 1 compares the relative size of major components of the program based on student enrollments and credits.

Table 1: Program Enrollment and Credits Generated Data

	Students Enrolled	Student Credit Hours Generated	Average Credit Hrs. Generated Per Student
Business	531	470	.885
Industrial	421	388	.922
Agriculture	221	382	1.729
Home Economics	473	344	.727
Health	102	69	.676
Totals	1748	1653	.946

Based on student credit hours generated on an annual basis, the Business Department (470) is the largest department followed by industrial (388), agriculture (382), home economics (344), and health (69). However, home economics ranks second in the total

number of students served among the various departments. Because some departments tend to offer courses with varying credit values, it is possible to examine the average number of credit hours generated by each student in the five programs. Table 1 clearly suggests that, on an average, students enrolled in the agriculture program tend to take almost twice as many courses in that area, when compared to the average number of courses taken per year by students in the other vocational programs.

Enrollment patterns by sex also reveal some interesting insights. Table 2 presents the enrollment patterns by sex for grades 9-12 for the 1978-79 school year.

The agriculture department with a 2:1 male/female split appears to be the least sex-biased program, while health occupations with an 8:1 female/male split appears to be the most heavily biased department. Another notable trend involves the extent of sex bias at each grade level. Generally, the higher the grade level, the lower the sex bias in enrollment.

Handicapped and Disadvantaged. In order to get a measure of the relative effort of each program to serve handicapped and disadvantaged students, the total number of student credits generated by handicapped and disadvantaged students was divided by the total number of student credit hours generated by each program in 1978-79.

In terms of both absolute numbers and percentages of credit hours generated by handicapped and disadvantaged students, the Agriculture and Industrial education programs are the leaders in serving the handicapped and disadvantaged students of Elwood High School.

Table 2: Enrollment Patterns by Sex, School Year 1978-79

	9th Grade		10th Grade		11th Grade		12th Grade		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Business	45.8	54.2	76.5	23.5	76.4	23.6	72.0	28.0	73.4	26.6
Industrial	17.9	82.1	11.2	88.8	21.1	78.9	16.4	83.6	15.7	84.3
Agriculture	22.4	77.6	29.5	70.5	36.1	63.9	41.4	58.6	32.6	67.4
Home Economics	100.0	0	79.6	20.4	82.3	17.7	78.5	21.5	82.7	17.3
Health	--	--	94.2	5.8	71.4	28.6	75.0	25.0	87.2	12.8

Table 3: Student Credit Hours Generated by Handicapped and Disadvantaged Students, 1978-79

	Number of Credit Hours Generated by Handicapped and Disadvantaged Students	Percent of Credit Hours Generated by Handicapped and Disadvantaged Students
Business	77.0	16.4
Industrial	152.5	39.3
Agriculture	172.0	45.0
Home Economics	98.5	28.6
Health	19.5	28.3

Staff Values and Attitudes

The vocational education staff at Elwood High School was interviewed with regard to: 1) how their interest in vocational education was developed, 2) what were the major impacts or benefits they felt students received from their teaching efforts, 3) what activities supported these efforts, and 4) what formal and informal feedback mechanisms were used by teachers to monitor the impact of their teaching effort.

Development of Vocational Interests. Most teachers mentioned their high school or junior high school experiences when discussing their early development of an interest in vocational education. Descriptions of early vocational education interests also revealed that the teachers attended either Elwood or school systems of a similar character. With the exception of some of the younger staff, practical work experience was virtually always mentioned as

part of the development of their interest in a specific field of vocational education. Going to college after high school and then teaching immediately after college was not found to be a career pattern for any of the vocational educators at Elwood. The only teacher who was close to this pattern attended a college preparatory high school. This teacher felt that she and her fellow high school students received too narrow an education which lacked practical and enjoyable experiences. Teachers frequently mentioned people who inspired or assisted them in some other way in getting a bachelor's degree. Most teachers obtained their degrees locally (at Reston) or in similar institutions. All but the newest staff members have received formal education beyond the bachelor's degree and a master's degree was by no means uncommon among the staff.

Impacts of Teaching Efforts. When Elwood vocational teachers were asked to identify the impacts or thrusts of their teaching efforts, responses were most frequently in the affective domain (attitudes of students). Teachers frequently were uncomfortable with this question. An industrial arts teacher's response, "that's hard to nail down," seemed to be shared in spirit by many of the teachers. Answers were frequently preceded by cautious qualifiers like "I'd like to think; I suppose."

Most major thrusts appeared to focus on helping students in getting along with other people, self-confidence, self-awareness, career development, and decision-making. The vocational teachers clearly enjoyed and were comfortable talking about these non-skill related impacts of their teaching. Responses related to vocational

skill development were most frequently mentioned by the special education staff within the vocational education department.

Supporting Student Activities. Home economics and agriculture teachers were quick to mention student organization (club) activities when asked what kind of student activities supported major thrusts of their teaching effort. The clubs were seen by these teachers as an opportunity for students to get expereince and practice in both skill areas and personal growth. Business teachers mentioned in-class activities which integrated skills. Personal discussions with students about problems, aspirations, courses, and similar topics were also frequently mentioned as reinforcing activities. By contrast, classroom assignments, tests, and similar traditional educational practices were seldom mentioned. When these were discussed, it was in terms of their impact on non-skill areas. For example, office practice assignments were mentioned for their ability to help students make decisions and to boost self confidence, rather than for their role in improving office skills.

Teacher Self Evaluation. Teachers were asked how they know that they are effective teachers. The almost universal answer was informal discussions with former students. These discussions occurred at homecoming events, and on the streets of Elwood. Teachers were particularly favorably impressed by comments such as "Now I see what you mean about..." or specific comments about particular activities that meant a great deal to an individual student. Formal student follow-up studies were viewed by most as a way of obtaining feedback that could be used to improve teaching.

Teachers also frequently mentioned the classroom atmosphere, level of class work, and student development as a way of affirming that their efforts were effective. An orderly (not necessarily quiet) class room was valued. Student interest and personal development landmarks were discussed with much animation. Students who did poorly in other classes but achieved well in the vocational teacher's class were highly valued. This was particularly true of discipline problem students.

With the exception of one teacher, feedback from administrators and formal evaluative techniques were not mentioned or were seen as having limited value. Standard measures of success in vocational education programs such as employability and pay were not mentioned frequently. Nevertheless, as these things were known to improve, the quality of life of former students also was considered to be improved. Teachers were more impressed by students being happy with whatever they were doing, with only limited regard for any relationship to the vocational program in which they participated.

Teacher pride was of an individual or, less frequently, a program nature. Each teacher felt that they had contributed as an individual to the students' growth and development. Teachers who were responsible for entire programs (e.g., building trades, agriculture, home economics, etc.) could and would allude to group achievement. Even these teachers, however, more frequently mentioned individual student achievements as evidence of their effectiveness. Official measures (North Central and State department evaluations) of program or teaching effectiveness were <u>never</u>

mentioned. While these reports alluded to the high quality of the Elwood vocational education program, the teachers and Mr. Campbell, the vocational education director, were much more modest. A concerned and cautious "I think we have a pretty good program" was the closest thing to boasting about the total Elwood effort. Teachers seemed to feel that students were award winners in both school and life, rather than to feel that the Elwood vocational education program was outstanding.

Student Organizations

The Future Farmers of America (FFA) and Future Homemakers of America (FHA) student organizations (clubs) are an integral part of the agriculture and home economics programs respectively. Clubs in other areas are more loosely tied to the programs. At the present time, industrial and business club activities do not play a major role in the curriculum. Teachers reported that these clubs have been more active in the past and that students' interest has been declining. For the purposes of this section, statements about student organizations in the Elwood program will be restricted to FFA and FHA.

Club activities are organized around the content of the areas they represent. Teachers and students both reported that club activities are most beneficial to students in terms of personal growth and development as opposed to work skill development. The contest or competitive components of club activities, of course, supplement and sharpen occupational skill development. Nevertheless, most of the discussed benefits of contests were in terms of

personal pride in working on a project or activity of the student's own choice and of competition.

Holding club office builds leadership, a concept that clearly goes beyond the increased knowledge and skill training associated with specific occupational areas such as food preparation or small engine repair.

In addition to the more highly visible benefits of contests and office holding, clubs are also heavily involved in group projects which are seen as important to building such student characteristics as self confidence, inter-personal communication skills, handling responsibilities and developing positive attitudinal outcomes. In addition, teachers reported that these activities give students an opportunity to see relationships among various skills. this latter feature of club activities is particularly true of FFA farm activities where different classes are given different responsibilities which are tied together at the club level. For example, production agriculture students make seed selections, crop selections and breeding decisions, while farm management students negotiate with landlords and decide when and where to sell school farm products. The Home Economics department runs a day care center and the HERO club runs a restaurant in which students make similar decisions. The building trades program makes use of similar concepts in course related activities. Many of these activities allow students to take financial risks with the benefit of staff guidance. Most teachers seem to pride themselves on being able to intervene less frequently as each club or group of students makes these kinds of decisions with increasing sophistication.

Peter's story in the next section illustrates some of the benefits that students appear to gain from these club activities. Judy Trice provides another example.

Judy was interviewed at a HERO (Home Economics Related Occupations) breakfast fund raiser. Judy, the Lacey County FHA president, said that the leadership responsibilities helped her overcome shyness. "I used to get embarrassed about what people might say. In real life I'm really shy." Since becoming involved in leadership responsibilities with FHA, "people know that I'm not just a quiet little girl--that I can do things." Judy is interested in becoming a teacher. The idea of teaching used to seem frightening. However, Judy now feels that she has the "courage to face kids and parents and stuff." Of course not all kids are in the FHA. In Judy's words, "Other girls have cheerleading, band, and things like that. They don't have time for FHA. I have time for FHA but not for cheerleading."

If one considers awards in competitive events and state and national offices held, Elwood's vocational student organizations, especially in Agriculture and Home Economics, are indeed outstanding. These sorts of measures frequently bring coveted recognition to staff and programs as well as to students. Undoubtedly, the quality of the staff and programs are, in part, responsible for the success of the club programs. Contest critics sometimes charge staff with "playing the winners" as a way of explaining the success of the FFA clubs in terms of winning contests and attaining offices at regional, state and national levels. Such a charge undoubtedly is comforting to those who have struggled hard to

help students win such contests and offices and who frequently have to deal with the disappointment that is inherent in contests and elections which frequently have more losers than winners.

A more realistic explanation for Elwood's student organization successes lies in a better understanding of the Elwood community and the school system as a whole. Vocational education programs typically do poorly in the "competition" for "better" students. In a community that values agriculture and other practical endeavors utilized in the local economy, in a school system that is of generally high quality throughout, in a high school where eighty percent of the student body take vocational education courses, in a community and school where there is little stigma attached to being in the vocational "track", in a community where former vocational students become part of the town's leadership, the "winners" play themselves.

This is not to say that the staff does not have a role in club activities and successes. Both staff and students stated repeatedly that staff involvement in FFA and FHA is both time consuming and intense. Students receive much encouragement to participate. At one point during the study, a home economics teacher and an office holding student were discussing various options for future elections. At times the discussion seemed very similar to the conversation that might be expected to occur between an athlete and a coach at a track event. The student was repeatedly told that she could do it. Student doubts were countered by the teacher listing past student achievements in the area of the doubt. The achievements and trials of former students were also discussed.

Teachers and students both insisted that the major benefits of club activities for most students occurred more on a daily basis and drew primarily on group activities as opposed to contest and office running activities. These benefits were said to involve interpersonal skills, responsibility, meeting the public, relating to strange adults as adults, and so forth. Resource limitations prevented extensive documentation of these club effects. This is unfortunate since local perceptions place the highest values on these less visible effects of vocational club activities at Elwood.

Interviews With Former Elwood Students

Scholars, administrators, and teachers are all interested in what happens to students as a result of being in vocational programs. Traditionally, student follow-up data are of the survey variety. In keeping with the spirit of this study which attempts to explore the value of anecdotal data in researching the impact of vocational education, follow-up interviews were conducted with three former Elwood vocational education students. Each of these interviews contains the former student's impressions of the impact of the Elwood vocational education program. Frequently, follow-up data are used to evaluate vocational education. The data presented here is for the sole purpose of exploring the richness of this kind of data. Both negative and positive features alluded to by the interviewees should be taken lightly. Subject selection was essentially arbitrary and the limited number of students interviewed makes the sample entirely inadequate for evaluative purposes. It is suggested that the reader concentrate on the value of the data multiplied as if large numbers of similar individual stories

could be told about vocational education's impact on students. Consideration should also be given to the extent to which students are in control of both the quality and quantity of vocational course impact.

Peter. Peter's interview was conducted in a student union lounge. As with all the interviews, no questions were prepared ahead of time. The interview was informal. A tape recorder was switched on and placed between Peter and the investigator as they sat on a sofa. Peter explains how he became interested in agriculture at Elwood High School

> "We live outside of town, my family does, about three and a half miles out and my father... is a professor... and my mother is an instructor of nursing... and we live on just fourteen acres. But, it is out in the rural area and so a lot of the friends I made as I grew up were from farms and I developed an interest in agriculture, I guess, probably from living out in the country. So when I got into high school, I was sure that I was going to take college prep., some of the courses which normally doesn't include a vocational course. Our junior high has a period once a week, which is called the activity period, and you can do one of any number of things and one of your choices would be getting into an ag. activity. People from the high school come down and tell you about agriculture and what's happening at the high school. That first got my interest in F.F.A. Later, a lot of my friends decided to sign up for agriculture and I had room for another course and I was interested in agriculture, so I signed up for vocational agriculture....Then, after I got into the course, after my first year, I enjoyed it so much that I knew I was going to sign up for agriculture the next year."

> "Well, agriculture was interesting to me and still is. I also realize that in the next ten years, I'm not going to get into production agriculture. We don't own a farm....To get into a farming enterprise now is limited to people who are from a farm and can go back to their father's farm....So I decided there had to be some way I could get into agriculture and stay in agriculture....When I was a kid, I always liked to fool around with batteries and lights and things and I started applying electricity

to agriculture and that was my thrust throughout the four years that I took agriculture at Elwood."

"They (F.F.A.) have a proficiency award area called 'Agricultural Electrification'...You could call them projects. They call them SOEP, which stands for Supervised Occupational Experience Programs....And in Elwood you get credit for being in agriculture and a credit for completing your SOEP...because they feel that the educational value you get from SOEP is worth another credit."

"You can pick an area in your SOEP (in) thirty different areas. Actually you can do anything. These thirty areas are areas of competition...A judging committee will look at your record books and will interview you and decide which is best. It ranges from production areas, from cattle production to business areas such as agriculture electrification, mechanics,...just tons of different things....And so, once you have decided on an SOEP, you can see if it will fit into one of these areas...."

"I was interested in electricity. I saw this area. I said, 'Well, shoot.' I'll go into that."

"A friend of my Dad's had a building he'd just put up on his farm. He needed help wiring it, so I helped wire it. I got a job with another guy, an electrical engineer who lives north of Elwood, who was in a consulting firm....They needed a grain dryer set up to test their control units on....So they bought an old dryer, and it was an old one, had been burned up in a fire. And he hired me to take the wiring diagrams and tell him what materials he needed to put the thing back in running condition. That was an excellent project."

About college Peter says:

"I considered enrolling in Agriculture Engineering here in the College of Agriculture. They have four options or specialties that you take after your junior year. One of them is power and processing, electrical power and processing. I thought, that's kind of where I want to go. I found out what the curriculum was like, and unfortunately...it did not have the emphasis in the areas I wanted. For that reason, I opted to go into electrical engineering, and get my emphasis in electricity and electronics. At the same time I can pick up an Ag course here and there. Ag courses are accepted as technical electives in the College of Engineering. I also have three other electives. I can take ag courses and maintain that relationship. In agricultural engineering they talked more about practical applications--how to hook this up and how to wire this up, and how to use this.

But I wanted to know how to design and build. So for that I need the electrical engineering, the electronics end of it."

"Being in engineering, I've met lots of kids. There are a lot of kids in engineering here at the University (that) come from much larger high schools. They've had calculus, they've had advanced chemistry and they've had a couple of courses in physics and I haven't. Simply because my high school didn't offer them. I exhausted the science courses in my high school in three years. They have four science courses. They have biology, introduction to the physical sciences, they have an advanced biology course....There was no advanced physics, no advanced chemistry, which as a pre-engineering student, I would have taken....We didn't have a calculus course, per se. We had a course called elementary analysis which did a little calculus. You know, these people that come with two years of calculus from their high school, if that would have been my high school, I'm sure I would have taken advantage of it--I'm positive I would have. But, I wouldn't have sacrificed the agriculture course. The practical knowledge that I received from the Ag course was invaluable."

"...Through F.F.A., which is part of the Ag program, the Ag program and F.F.A. is one and the same, I developed a speaking ability...through speaking contests. I would also say I've developed a degree of leadership. I'm holding a state office in the F.F.A. right now. I've developed a general knowledge about agriculture in many different areas which I wouldn't have otherwise....And I think to develop those types of skills at this stage would take a lot....I can take a summer school course or I can take an extra semester of college and pick up the calculus and everything I've missed. But you can't go back to F.F.A. and agriculture and I think the people I've met, the opportunity I've had with F.F.A. and agriculture, have just been great....Just this past March I went to Europe for three weeks all expenses paid, with the F.F.A. We went to six different countries. This was the proficiency work program, the agriculture education. I won my section level, which is a division of the State; I went on and won the State level; filled out an application, went to the regionals (there are four regions in the nation); took that, went to the national; won the national award. The twenty-two national winners were given this trip to Europe for three weeks... I met people. There was only one from this state. There was one from Virginia, there were some from the States of Washington, Kansas, Louisiana. It was great, I don't know what to say. I have absolutely no regrets about my involvement in the agriculture and F.F.A. program. I don't feel I missed any courses, or missed anything at all. I think I gained a lot, a heck of a lot."

Ben. Ben talks about high school days.

"I wanted to quit school. I hated school...Me and my father sat down and we had a little talk one night. My father graduated from high school in 1932. So he said it would be much easier...in '63...he said, 'You will graduate. If you just go there won't be any problem.' But I didn't have a problem, I just didn't like to be the attraction. I didn't like people to even know I was around because I was intrigued with automobiles, cars and stuff, and I didn't want to have to have detention and hang around the school anymore, because that took time away from my hobby of playing around the gas station, whether it was cleaning up or doing tools and stuff..."

About industrial arts:

"I loved that. That was an easy 'A'. I took woodworking, and I didn't particularly care for that, I passed it. I took a drafting course, I think I got a C+ or a B-. I knew I didn't like it. I wanted to be more creative with my hands than sitting drawing little lines and having to be concerned about whether the tip of my pencil was sharpened; so I passed the course with no problem, but I didn't enjoy drafting."

About metals and the metals instructor:

"This man had a world of education in his mind. I mean he could simplify a procedure, show you how to do it and show you why you can't do it this way, because he knew. He had been there before."

About school in general:

"I look back now, I don't know if I would do anything different in school. I always seemed to make it. I guess I was fortunate enough that I had enough common sense--I never studied in school. I studied for one test in the 8th grade and flunked it, and I said, 'Well, there's no use in wasting my time.' So I never studied. I took the books from the school to the gas station, set them down, and in the morning I would pick them up at the gas station and carry them back across the street into the school. I never looked at them, didn't have the slightest idea what they were talking about. But I could almost always pull a D or a C+ on a test. Enough of it soaked in..."

"To me they weren't teaching me anything. The course I hated the worst was economics and government. I hated that course. There was just nothing that they

were offering me because I knew that my involvement would be ultimately the machine, the automobile. I just knew it because it was in my blood. I used to bring car parts home, clean 'em all up, and paint 'em. I mean I was like 14 years old, I kept them all underneath my bed. They were my prizes. Cam shafts, the first time I got to take a cam shaft out of a motor, well you couldn't have given me anything to make me any happier. To think this man would let me tear his motor apart and put the new parts in it. Put it back together and get it running."

About working:

"I worked at the gas station across the street from the high school. I just was very intrigued with cars. Period. So, I started hanging around and sweeping and putting gas in cars. I loved the PR work with people, because at the time I was on the shy side. I wanted to know people and be able to talk to them and working at the gas station gave me a lot of opportunity to do that. People came in and they had a definite need. The most important thing was to be polite. Rather than say, 'Can I help you?' I'd say, 'Can I fill her up, sir?' Gas was only 31¢ a gallon, so it was a lot easier to get a fill-up. From there I got a job at a new car dealership. (This was Ben's cooperative education experience.) They called me up and asked if I wanted to work in the parts department. I said, 'Yeah, sure.' So I went to work there in the summer, like in June or July, and worked there during the course of two school years. But I left on account of wages, they wouldn't pay me anything. After I was out of school and supposedly started being productive and paying your way, they only wanted to pay $1.30 an hour. So I left and started to bounce around through the factories. My first job after that was Reston Forge. I worked there as an inspector paid $3.05 an hour, but I hated the job. I didn't like the work. I wasn't satisfied with it so I left at the end of thirty days. So from there I went to Power Electric. I heard the pay scale wasn't too great, but I looked at people here in town who had three or four kids in school or stuff and they were making it, and I said well I guess its something in my mind. (Wanting good pay?) So I worked there for thirty days and I said, 'Good morning.' to the boss one day. He blew his stack and told me I wasn't paid to talk, I was paid to work and I said, 'Well, if you can't say good morning two minutes before 7:00, I don't want to work here. Send my check to me.' So I left. From there I went to (another manufacturer in the area) and I started on the shipping docks, first driving a fork lift and stuff, well, I didn't like it. I was too conscientious. I didn't want to be

hurt or anything or damage anything. Well, fork lift drivers are known to be wreckless with their conduct and they didn't care. So they deemed me too slow an operator because I would take my time. They've got caution areas and slow and stop signs. The other guys wouldn't stop, just go through blasting their horn, you know. So I went from there into the carpentry shop area where they made the wooden reels. I worked off and on in the carpentry shop are for approximately a year and a half. Then I was young enough that they used to take me out of my department and transfer me to wherever they needed me. All these guys were going to Vietnam and there were all these openings which they didn't want to fill, 'cause these guys were coming back in say two-three years, so they didn't want to put on permanent employees."

"After having a couple of other jobs and 3-4 years, I had the opportunity to buy a radiator shop, which sounded good. The potential was there, but I envisioned a lot greater success than I had when I went into business. So May 4, 1970 I went into business with a radiator shop on West State Street, which is now an abandoned building 'cause the zoning wasn't proper on it. The first year, well the first six months, I think my total profit was $800. The next complete year was $890. Well, by that time I was busted. So I went to work in 1972, days, down in (a structural steel firm--miles away) as a welder and they offered me a job as a fitter which paid more money. It was easy, I was doing it anyway, so I took that; and I worked down there seven months, and it got to be the point I was busy in the radiator shop. We were going into winter time and I asked for a leave of absence and the supervisor said, 'No, not for health reasons.' and I said, 'Well, I'm working 19-20 hours a day, there's going to be some sleep. You guys are going into your slow period, let me take off until April. But they wouldn't see it, so I quit."

About running the radiator shop while working as a fitter:

"I usually got back into town about 6:00-6:30. I'd grab supper and I'd work until well, whenever I got done because everything I had that night had to go out. I would stop in small towns between here and the job and pick up radiators on the way through. The guys would set them on top of the pop machine. If there was a radiator there as I was coming up the road, I'd pull in, pick it up, and then I would drop it off. And so I would pick it up and deliver. But when I tried the radiator shop by itself again in 1974, I was broke again, or where I was uncomfortable. So then I went to work in Elwood as a maintenance man on second shift. That was, I believe, April, '74 and I stayed there until October, I think, I'm not certain on the dates, but

anyway I got a lay-off. I was down again and a man came in here one day and he said, 'Why don't you buy an exhaust pipe machine, let me set you up. $10,000. He says, 'Everyplace I've gone in this area to attempt to sell one, they keep telling me, go to Ben, if anyone knows exhaust, he knows exhaust, 'because I've done a lot of custom work for kids and motor homes, and stuff. I would cut and bend and weld and fabricate it out of something that wasn't. So I'm thinking to myself, man I got about $200 in the bank. I don't know. He's talking $10,000 just for the machine, the initial twenty lengths of pipe and a few mufflers. And then I don't have a hoist, so it's going to take me $15,000 to have a couple of thousand for advertising to try and get the thing off the ground. So I went to the bank. I had an older house, and I had a clear deeded title to my house. It wasn't fixed up, it wasn't fabulous, but it was ground, it was security. So I talked to them and I put my house in trust and just signed a note that said I could borrow the money without putting a mortgage on my house. I went ahead and got the machine and they delivered it at the end of May and it's been great ever since!"

"Working with exhaust systems is where I'm at. Because it doesn't make any difference, really, what it is, if I can't buy a pipe, I can fabricate it. If only there's one small break in the pipe, I'll just cut out the bad area, weld a new piece of pipe, and then go from there. You know in this day and age people don't have the money to spend. Everything else is so high. Groceries are costing them $100 a week you know, if there's four or five people in the family. A '76 Ford exhaust is approximately $187 front to back. Fords normally break right in front of the muffler, because there's no brackets to support it. Well, I can cut out that bad area and put it all back for $20. I feel that I've made money and it's got them out of a bind. You know a muffler ticket is $35."

Leslie's Story: Leslie is a clerk in the women's sportswear department at a downtown Elwood department store. She is nineteen (almost 20) and has been out of high school for two years. On an evening basis, she attends the local community college.

"My Senior year is when I realized that college should be for me...'cause I wanted to major in helping mentally handicapped children, deaf and blind. I was a senior. I only had two years of math, one year of biology."

According to Leslie's employer, she is a "unique individual." "She's really very, very mature for the average 19-year-old, much

more so than the average....I am aware Leslie has been looking around for another position. It's no big dark secret or anything."

Concerning her present position Leslie says:

> "I enjoy the work I'm in now, but I'm not going anywhere. I'm at a standstill. I can't decide what I want to take,...I took some data processing courses at the community college which were interesting, but there again you're working with a computer. The one job that I really considered heavily was working at the bank as a teller. My wages would have increased very little and things they expected of you are more or less what we take for granted, like your social behavior when you're out--you still are representing the store. You always keep it (social behavior) in mind when you're out, when you see a customer."

While in high school, Leslie took several vocational courses.

> "I took child care and I took basic sewing and custom clothing and textiles, and then I took all of the foods courses and psychology for living."

Leslie also took two years of horticulture.

> "Oh, I loved that class; that was mostly dealing with plants and things like that. The teachers in those areas--home economics and agriculture--I believe are about the best teachers, as far as I could tell. The home economics teacher is really super and the teachers from the agriculture program really get the point across. You know they just lay it on the line. The main thing I got out of that had really nothing to do with horticulture. It was associating with people. They mostly teach you how to put yourself at the other person's level, to feel how they do. You know some high school kids are very rude to other people; but if you go down to the Ag Department, it's really not like that because the teachers down there put it on the line and they don't mince words either. They really teach you to associate with other people."

Speaking about her high school days:

> "I did a lot of maturing the year I started working. So when I started working I was 16, very shy, I mean I couldn't even look at the customers. I had a lot of manners but I didn't know how to use them. In that one year I did a lot of growing up. I matured so fast that I was bored because I was more or less waiting for the other people in my class to catch up with me."

"I think if I had it to do all over again, I would have taken a lot of different classes. I would have stuck with the basic ones that you had to take. Biology is all that I took. I would have taken more biology and more algebra. It's a real shame. See, that's because I was real shy and all my friends took the Home Economics classes. I should have taken more math classes, Accounting II, Shorthand and Advanced Typing. I would drop the child care courses. It was very interesting, but it was more or less basic. I enjoyed all the classes that I had, but quantity foods I would have dropped and I had to take all those classes up to that. The psychology class I could have dropped. A lot of the Home Economics dealt with interviews and meeting people. I went through a taping session three times: one class was HERO, one was psychology for living and I can't remember which one the other one was, but I was picked in all three of them. Those classes did help me but the ones that I should have taken--I think they would have helped me more. If I had taken the other classes, I'd be in college."

Leslie didn't always feel this way about college:

"My father was always pushing college. I think that's why I didn't go. He was devastated when I didn't, when I said, 'Absolutely not, I don't have any use for it.' Which I don't know if I do have any use for four years, but I definitely need something. Just a little bit, you know, not a lot, but I think if even just a little bit--even go for a year."

Mr. Campbell--The Vocational Education Director

Within the state's vocational education community, the Elwood vocational program is frequently mentioned in concert with Elwood High School's former principal and director of the vocational program, James Campbell.

Elwood is Mr. Campbell's home town. After graduating from high school he attended the university at Reston and majored in industrial arts and physical education. He joined the service after his junior year in college during World War II. He left the service in 1946 and completed his degree the next year and began teaching

industrial arts in Elwood. Beginning in 1951, Mr. Campbell was also the football coach and during the seventeen years of his coaching career, Elwood had eight undefeated seasons which Mr. Campbell feels was very important to his relationship with the community. Mr. Campbell became the cooperative education coordinator in 1952 and continued coordinating and teaching until 1967 when he became the assistant principal.

Two years later he became principal. In addition to these responsibilities, Mr. Campbell has also served the United Fund Drive (Chairman), Rotary (President) the Junior Chamber of Commerce, Boy Scouts and has done some church work. He completed his Master's in 1949 at Colorado State University. Since then he has frequently taught college level courses on a part-time basis and has served in several advisory capacities to the State Department of Vocational Education.

The success of Mr. Campbell's cooperative education activities was important to the foundation of the Elwood vocational education program's growth. During the 1950's, Mr. Campbell began sharing his experiences with other vocational educators who appreciated both the successes of his program and Mr. Campbell's modesty in regard to the program's achievements. Similar kinds of hometown recognition of both the vocational program's success and the success of the football team, allowed Mr. Campbell to become a successful advocate for additional, experienced staff at adequate salaries. As Mr. Campbell put it, we "bought our staff." From discussions with staff, it is also apparent that the quality of the community and the affability of Mr. Campbell were also important

factors in drawing good staff. It is also apparent that "good staff" means dedication to the vocational programs, students, the community and a willingness to work long hours without being asked. Mr. Campbell characterized the growth as slow and steady over an extended period of time. In addition, Mr. Campbell characterizes the guidance personnel during this period, and today, as knowledgeable and experienced in vocational education.

Section I and II Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The preceding sections have described several (but by no means all of the) features of the Elwood vocational program. One purpose of this case study has been to help others understand more about the vocational program in Elwood. Many readers of this study will be searching for generalizable explanations of valued vocational program features found in Elwood. Every situation is not new and what works one place will often work in another place. Other situations are different and critical differences are not always easy to see. Sometimes it is difficult to know where to look.

The above descriptions are for the most part empirical. That certain events explain other events in a case study situation is a matter of opinion about what is important, what the effects are (based on what they appear to be) and so on. Reading a case study allows one to experience something vicariously. It is hoped that each reader will be able to incorporate the Elwood case study "experience" into other similar experiences so that they can arrive at a comprehensible and generalizable understanding of Elwood.

What follows is a discussion of various ways of explaining or "seeing" how the vocational education program at Elwood came to be. It is hoped that the reader will draw her/his own "conclusions." The following conclusions are offered as possible, plausible and (it is hoped), probable. Some judgements, rather than facts, are included to suppot the hypotheses which serve as conclusions. For example, there are no "hard" data nor professional (teaching)

experience to support the judgement that the vocational teachers at Elwood are not significantly "better" or more skilled than other vocational educators. Statements of this sort are included because the question is crucial to the hypothesis, part of which is based on supportable statements. Somewhere along the line the data, which can never be complete, have to be fitted to theory. Gaps have to be filled in until additional data are collected.

Conclusions

One of the purposes of the Elwood case study is to explain why the Elwood High School Vocational program is so "good." The operational definition of "good" in the case of the Elwood vocational program includes two factors--high enrollments and high success in contest endeavors.

The Mr. Campbell hypothesis.

Going into the study, the hypothesis was that Mr. Campbell would be the most likely single causal factor in any explanation of the success of the Elwood programs. Reasons for this are several:

- Mr. Campbell was the vocational director and had become the high school principal.
- Mr. Campbell had worked in the Elwood schools for nearly 30 years and had thus always been involved in the program's development.
- Mr. Campbell had been recognized as a leading vocational educator by two universities which had chosen him repeatedly as a teacher of graduate classes and by the state department of vocational education, which repeatedly sought his advice in a variety of ways.

Interviews with Mr. Campbell and other observations gave additional support to this theory and an understanding of how Mr. Campbell's role mixed with other variables. The existence of several other variables tends to mediate the "Great Man" theory into a "great man at the right place and at the right time" theory with the emphasis on place as well as man.

The influence of the community hypothesis.

Several features of Elwood which seem to facilitate the existence of good public school vocational education programs are rare in middle and late 20th century America. (Remember that "good" here derives much of its meaning from contests and high enrollment.) For example, most Americans live in communities which are more heterogeneous in terms of values. Neighboring Reston with university as well as agricultural, professional and industrial sectors if a good example. Major population centers such as New York, Chicago, Los Angeles are almost certainly even more heterogeneous. The problems of schools having to deal with several competing interest groups such as ethnic minorities, labor, industry, commerce, proponents of higher education and so on just do not exist to the same degree in Elwood as in many other school districts.

School districts in professional communities (e.g., Skokie, Illinois; the Turtle Creek area of Dallas, some districts in Westchester County, N.Y.) may have a sort of cultural or value homogeneity, but not the sort which would likely spawn an emphasis on vocational education goals, content areas and processes within their schools.

The impression of feeling, if you will, of Elwood is that its people are practical and quietly interested in "a" if not "the" good life--a not ostentatious good life of well kept (not necessarily new) uncrowded (not mansion-scale) homes, the kind of life that a skilled worker of either the blue or white collar variety can have in a small town without the need for a faster-paced professional career and education. Part of Elwood's good life means the stability of staying in Elwood. Peter knows that staying in Elwood is to some degree inconsistent with his career goals and, though he shares many of Elwood's values, he does not expect to settle in Elwood. However, since his interests in agriculture in high school and his training are consistent with those interests, he might, if he wished, settle near home. Perhaps it is simply a matter of Elwood being a small town. Small towns may, as a general rule, be incapable of supporting more than a relatively narrow set of values. In any event, Elwood appears to have a core of values that is at least consistent with many of the values implicit in the vocational education curriculum.

The FFA and FHA seem to provide impacts that have as much to do with Elwood or small town culture as they do with vocational education. Both students and faculty compared contests and club office holding to athletic competition, all of which might serve to combat small town feelings of inferiority. Peter's story about his FFA experiences putting him a "leg up" on his more academically trained peers, may illustrate this phenomenon. A complete analysis of the local newspaper files might also support arguments that

these views of activities generalize to other sectors of the school system and the community as well.

Virtually everyone involved in FFA and FHA mentions "getting along with others" as a major component in these programs. It may be that the kind of "getting along" that these people talk about is more important or more valued in small towns. "Getting along" skills were also alluded to several times in each of the follow-up interviews as being important at work. Community and vocational values on getting along are in concert.

Closely associated with the values of Elwood, and easier to document, is the economic base of the town, which also seems to be consistent with the school's emphasis on vocational education. Aside from the normal professional services of any community (e.g., lawyers, accountants, medical professionals, teachers, etc.) the local economy of agriculture, medium to small manufacturing, and home-owned retail sales seems to be dependent on job skills found in vocational education programs but not so much in general education programs.

The recent growth of Reston may increase demand for the college preparatory curriculum. More and more college professors are living in Elwood and commuting the short distance to Reston. Their children will almost certainly be college bound. For many of these people, Elwood will be their home town only in the sense that they grew up there. Many sons and daughters of farmers, many of whom are quite prosperous, will also be interested in college preparatory courses. At the present time, many of these people are taking agriculture courses in the hopes that the family-

farm tradition can be retained, and as preparation for college work in agriculture. It is probably fair to say that in addition to vocational goals, the agriculture and the home economics departments are also part of the cultural "baggage" of the community and play a role similar to civics, state history, and other courses which impart social facts, beliefs and values to children. With many farms and agriculture related industry in the area, current interest in agriculture is consistent with the job opportunities of the town. Retail sales and office jobs also exist in sufficient degree to utilize skills imparted in business education. Equally important, many of the local businesses are small and are unlikely to be able to afford great numbers of college trained businessmen.

The home economics and industrial oriented programs provide knowledge and skills which are also avocational. ("Work in America," a report to the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare, has suggested that work is usually defined as paid employment. This definition devalues home makers and other people who do many things that others are paid for. The report suggested that "We can come closer to a multi-dimensional definition of work if we define it as an activity that produces something of value for other people", (p. 3). Using this recommended definition of work, many of these courses are vocational. Some have avocational benefits in that the main purpose of an individual cooking or woodworking project might be amusement. Courses in foods, needle trades, child care, auto mechanics, woodworking, carpentry, body work, all serve student and adult needs that are consistent with maintaining a fine home and family without depending on professional

services. These are areas which, in Elwood culture, are desirable functions of men and women homemakers, child rearers, and home mechanics. Much of the local industry depends on industrial skills. The town is not immune to national trends of eating out more often and working parents that demand vocational skills in food preparation and child care. These courses then are consistent with local economic and cultural factors.

The vocational programs in Elwood are an integral part of the schools in Elwood. The schools of Elwood have good evaluations by outside school persons. Many people in and around Elwood describe Elwood as a place that has good schools. A comment found in a North Central evaluation report that Elwood High School has "a conservative, no nonsense approach to education which many schools wish they had not lost" is not unlike the comments of many of Elwood's newer citizens who frequently mention the schools as a major reason for moving to Elwood. This was true of several high school teachers and of college professors who commute to Reston in a large part, because of their faith in the quality of Elwood's schools. While it was not the purpose of the case study to evaluate the entire Elwood school system, all indications are that it is a "good" school system that is capable of supporting "good" programs.

It appears then that the values of Elwood, the local economy and the local public schools combine to provide a fertile breeding ground for a large, competitive and thus probably good vocational education program. Elwood seems unique in that the size of the economic base is larger than would be expected for such a small town.

The staff hypothesis.

Mr. Campbell feels that the quality of the staff of the school, both vocational and academic, are chiefly responsible for the quality and size of the Elwood vocational education programs. No data were collected which would be inconsistent with such a hypothesis. Mr. Campbell's hypothesis, however, does not explain how his staff came to be in Elwood. Teacher salaries are not significantly higher than in other schools. While many teachers are well trained in the sense that they are certified and have advanced degrees, most received their education in Reston or in comparable institutions of higher learning, and, in general, appear to be not that much better than good teachers in other programs. Both native and non-native vocational teachers frequently mentioned that they had sought out jobs at Elwood High School because they knew it was a good program. This puts the quality of the programs as an antecedent to the quality of the staff and argues that the staff may be good because people are willing to compete and relocate. With the program's quality being an antecedent to much of the quality of the staff, the quality of the staff may explain why the program is good, but only the quality of the early staff members (Mr. Campbell included) can account for how the program came to be.

The academic staff hypothesis.

Mr. Campbell and other vocational staff members also commend the academic staff for not playing down the accomplishments of vocational students. Some students concurred, others did not. Mr. Campbell and other staff familiar with this problem in other

school districts probably appreciate that this problem does not exist in Elwood High School to the degree that it does elsewhere. Students recognize that it exists to the extent that it does exist in Elwood. The fact that such a large proportion of students take vocational courses is probably a very important factor here. In many schools, the vocational student is not the best academic student and it is easy to devalue the vocational student for that reason alone. While Elwood probably has as many "poor" students as any other community, they are not isolated in vocational courses, but take vocational courses along with "better" students.

The playing the winners hypothesis.

A hypothesis concerning the success of the FFA and FHA programs in terms of contest and office holding, is that the vocational staff "play the winners." The successes of FFA and FHA in Elwood are more easily explained by the great numbers of students which prevents these programs from being the sole province of the "poorer" student. The FFA and FHA programs at Elwood have winners because the values of parents, teachers, and the students themselves do not preclude winners from enrolling in these programs as is often the case in other schools.

The Mr. Campbell hypothesis revisited.

At first glance it seems difficult to over-estimate the importance of Mr. Campbell on the vocational education program at Elwood. There is a certain attractiveness in uncomplicated explanations of phenomena. Folklore surrounding Mr. Campbell in the vocational education community at state and university levels, would lead one to believe that if there were more Mr. Campbells,

there would be more vocational programs like that found in Elwood. After this study was under way, a professor of vocational education wanted to know how Mr. Campbell had built the program in Elwood. Being reluctant to discuss the case before it was completed and written up, I asked the professor in more general terms, if he felt that a single person could be so instrumental in an institution's development. He said, "Yes," and went further by saying that if Mr. Campbell were understood the program would be understood, reaffirming his position that Mr. Campbell was somehow a single causal factor in Elwood.

The seemingly tireless efforts of Mr. Campbell are important to the Elwood vocation education program as it exists today and as it has existed in the recent past. Even if one were to put aside the efforts of untold numbers of parents, students, community leaders and fellow teachers, pointing to Mr. Campbell as the (chief) causal factor in the development of Elwood's vocational education program poses as many intellectual and logical questions as are answered. We are still left with the difficult question of explaining what caused Mr. Campbell. Part of that answer is almost certainly Elwood, the Elwood schools and even the vocational education program as it existed when Mr. Campbell was a student in that school. The most plausible hypothesis would include all factors discussed so far. Any hypothesis that failed to include Mr. Campbell and the community (it's values, history, economy) would be dubious indeed.

Recommendations

Sections I and II of the Elwood Case study can properly be viewed as a small first step toward a more preferable comprehensive study of vocational education at the local level. Some of the most enlightening data were of an ethnographic variety. The follow-up interviews pointed to the complexity of each student, vocational education, and careers. Only the experienced teacher can comprehend the complexity involved when scores of students are grouped together in a classroom. This study only begins to tap that complexity and to show the difficult interrelationships between untold numbers of variables. Taking into consideration the complexity of vocational education and the holistic approach that the case study offers, it seems more than reasonable to recommend further case studies of local vocational education programs. It is further recommended that such studies include the resources necessary for the investigator to live in the community and to observe students and teachers as they interact. Site visits simply do not allow sufficient time for these kinds of data.

Another useful case study approach would be multiple cases of students as they take individual courses. Case studies of classroom teachers and vocational educators who have "built" exemplary programs, such as Mr. Campbell would also be useful to researchers, scholars, administrators, and fellow teachers.

SECTION III: SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY VIEWS OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

As attitudes and economic situations change, vocational education must respond to meet the changing needs of society. Many of the issues and problems to which local programs such as Elwood must respond are national in scope. Project IMPACT was designed to examine how communities and local programs view such issues and to gain a better understanding of how local school district staff respond to these changes. Five issues or problems, which are described below, were isolated for purposes of this case study.

Special Needs Students

Public Law 94-142 and the recent Amendments to the Vocational Education Act have mandated increased attention and educational opportunities for handicapped and disadvantaged students in all public education including vocational education. As an extension of the civil rights movement, students with special needs are entitled to receive an individually-designed educational program. In addition, whenever possible they are to be educated in regular vocational education classes.

Career Education

Career education was initiated in the early 1970's in an effort to make more students aware of career options while they were in school. Providing students at all grade levels with career awareness and exploration activities is an integral part of the career

education concept. Programs and concepts such as Experience-Based Career Education provide students with work experience and short internships in a variety of professional, technical, and related occupations.

Sex Equity/Stereotyping

Traditionally, vocational education has been characterized by heavy enrollments by one sex in traditional role content areas. Industrial occupations and agriculture have been traditionally male curricula. Home economic students have been overwhelmingly female in enrollments. Business occupations have been less involved in these problems. Recent political and social concerns revolving around differential pay and employment opportunities have resulted in increased concern over the school's role in this area. Education Amendments of 1976 focused extensively on the need to eliminate and/or reduce sex bias and sex role stereotyping.

Self Employment

Many of the skills taught in vocational education courses are those used in small, privately-owned businesses (e.g., repair shops, bakeries, etc.). Once established, these small concerns are able to hire additional workers, thereby creating jobs for others as well as for the owner/operator. Thus, small businesses provide vocational education with the means of increasing its impact on the economy of communities. The training of entrepreneurs as a strategy for increasing economic productivity is receiving greater and greater attention among some vocational

educators. This issue has not received much attention from federal and local levels at this time.

Basic Skills

Reading, writing and computational skills are seen as essential to job success by many people. These skills are usually provided in academic and general education courses. Vocational education courses rely on these skills, and to a limited degree, also teach these skills. Presently, there is some concern that vocational students lose the opportunity to obtain these basic skills as they acquire job skills in vocational programs.

The Questionnaire

Two questionnaires were designed and tested to measure school and community attitudes in Elwood toward these five issues. The school and community questionnaires were identical with regard to those items in the five issue/problem areas described above. The school questionnaire also addressed the attitudes of the high school staff toward program improvement, and assessed levels of communication among the staff regarding the issue/problem areas. Both questionnaires appear in Appendix A and B.

School questionnaires were distributed to informal samples of vocational educators, academic teachers, vocational advisory board members and school administrators. Twenty-seven of the thirty school questionnaires that were distributed were returned. Eighteen of the twenty community questionnaires distributed were returned by local citizens, former students and current students. The responses provided on these questionnaires provide only a

sampling of the views and opinions held by Elwood residents. The sample was not systematically or randomly drawn.

Ranking of the Program ImprovementIssues

For each of the five issues, school personnel were asked two questions: 1) how important do you feel it is for vocational education to address this issue (ratings from "not important" to "very important" were provided), and 2) how do you rate your school district's present efforts in meeting this need (ratings from "poor" to "excellent" were provided). Tables 4 and 5 illustrate the rankings (based on the average (mean) rating given the five issues by school personnel.

Table 4: Importance Ranking of Program Improvement Issues by School Personnel

Issue	Average Rating (1-7)
Basic skills	6.74
Sex bias (stereotyping)	6.41
Special needs students	5.89
Career education	5.78
Self employment	4.81

The two questions were also asked of 30 community members, including former students and local citizens. The ratings provided by the 27 respondents are presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 5: Ranking of the Elwood School's Efforts to Rate by School Personnel

Issue	Average Rating (1-7)
Sex bias/stereotyping	5.88
Career education	5.08
Basic skills	4.78
Special needs students	4.76
Self employment	4.20

Table 6: Importance Ranking of Program Improvement Issues by Community Personnel

Issue	Average Rating (1-7)
Basic skills	6.50
Career education	6.41
Sex bias/stereotyping	6.06
Special needs students	5.94
Self employment	5.39

Table 7: Ranking of the Elwood School's Efforts by Community Personnel

Issue	Average Rating (1-7)
Sex bias (stereotyping	5.83
Basic skills	5.11
Career education	4.91
Special needs students	4.88
Self employment	4.24

School personnel rated basic skills as the most important issue. They felt that the school's actual performance in the basic skills areas fell below actual performance in the areas of sex stereotyping and career education. Sex stereotyping was rated second in importance and first in actual performance. Special needs was rated third in importance and fourth in actual performance. Career education was rated fourth in importance and second in actual performance. Self employment was rated fifth in both importance and actual performance. From these data it seems to indicate that Elwood teachers are interested in increasing emphasis in the area of basic skills primarily, and that of serving special needs students to a lesser degree. Ratings also indicate that interest in career education and sex stereotyping is waning and that self employment will continue to be of lesser importance.

Community members agree that basic skills is the most important issue of the five. Community members rated actual performance in basic skills second as opposed to the school's lower ranking of third, showing more faith that this important issue is being met in the school's programs. Sex stereotyping was rated second in importance and first in actual performance by community people. Serving special needs students was ranked third in importance and fourth in actual performance. Career education was rated fourth in importance and second in actual performance. Self employment was rated fifth in both importance and actual performance.

Additional Issues

Eight school district personnel indicated that "there are more important issues/problems other than those issues described above"

(sex equity, comprehensive career education, basic skills, special needs education, and self employment). These issues, as well as respondent characteristics are described below.

1. This respondent is a teacher of agriculture. His more important issue reads: "Returning the operation of the school within budget limits."

   Comments. This issue/problem refers to a school board action which occurred just days before the questionnaire was distributed to the school. The board action included a reduction of personnel following a surprise budget report that revealed large district debts that had accrued undetected. A board member indicated that the problem involved recent expansion while others felt that computer and other budget system problems failed to provide an accurate picture of the district's financial situation.

2. This respondent is an industrial arts instructor. His issue reads: "Updating obsolete equipment, increasing work stations to accommodate larger class numbers, developing proper student attitudes."

   At the time the questionnaire was distributed, the industrial staff had been discussing equipment and program updating. Several members had recently visited nearby districts. One such district, which apparently has better facilities was of particular interest to the group. "Developing proper student attitudes" is an

unclear issue which nevertheless represents affective domain concerns which were frequently observed during the study.

3. A health and physical education teacher: "I think students should only work on vocational jobs when those jobs are actually giving them lifetime career experience. For most people, for instance, washing dishes at a restaurant isn't lifetime career experience. I also believe if we are providing such excellent experience in place of being in the school building classroom--that we shouldn't allow these students to be paid for the time they would otherwise be in school."
4. A business education teacher questions vocational and cooperative education enrollment: "Enrollment into high school vocational and cooperative education programs recently seems to be manipulated for administrative convenience as opposed to best interest of the student."
5. Two other business teachers mentioned "attitudes, business ethics (no cheating)" and "getting along with co-workers and employers."
6. Finally, an English teacher stated her issues as: "Problem solving, money management, instill positive values--discourage destructiveness--instill respect for public properties, environment, etc. Communication--husband-wife; parents-children; employee-employer; administrator-teacher; counselor-counselee; governing bodies-citizens; international, bilingual, etc."

Additional issues seem divisible into three main categories. Responses one and two mentioned local fiscal problems. Responses three and four were concerned with the value of vocational education generally and particularly cooperative work experiences. Responses five and six, and part of two all mentioned effective issues which were not distinctively vocational.

Program Improvement Strategies

The remainder of this section deals with reported activities responding to the five issues discussed earlier. The discussion is taken from school district staff questionnaire responses. Since school personnel are primarily responsible for implementing program improvements, no data were collected from community members regarding program improvement.

Sex Bias/Stereotyping. Responses to questions 13 and 14 represent three basic change strategies to reduce sex bias/ stereotyping. These are non-traditional modeling, non-traditional recruitment and course/content changes.

Most of those that mentioned the modeling strategy also mentioned new sex-fair textbooks. In addition, some respondents noted having non-traditional job holders as speakers or as community resource persons.

Recruitment was mentioned in reference to agriculture and industrial course offerings. Teachers mentioned "talking courses up." Some of the recruitment appeared to be selective. That is, an industrial teacher mentioned recruiting for areas other than metals and welding. A home economics teacher alluded to biases of the high school guidance staff.

Several respondents mentioned course revisions. The responses do not make clear what specific course revisions are made. Teachers may be referring to textbook and sex biased wording in course objectives. The agriculture department has expanded its horticulture area and the health occupations teacher wants to establish more program areas--presumably less sex-biased areas such as respiration therapy.

Special Needs Students. Responses to the special needs problem include additional resources and modifications of teaching processes and/or content.

The responses, "More staff! More help! More money! Actual aides in the classroom where mainstreaming occurs" provide concise descriptions of teacher feelings about the special needs issue. Administrative coordination was also mentioned.

Teachers also mentioned different kinds of special help for the special needs students. There was considerable variability in these responses which included "course additions", "purchase of driving simulator", "special assignments", and "additional attention." The staff indicated that they individually had done a number of things to improve vocational programs for special needs students. The list of program improvements included:

- Redesigning some projects and tasks for special needs students, providing more encouragement.
- Attending workshops and college classes dealing with this topic.
- Obtaining remediation help through the writing lab.

- Obtaining special books for these students.
- Changing course content and rate of speed with course materials.
- Adding selected material to courses for these students.
- Increasing staff to allow for more individual attention.
- Coordinating funding from different organizations and agencies.
- Using bilingual aides and bilingual materials.
- Placing these students in a special class which shares lab activities with a regular class which meets in another room at the same time.

Career Education. Strategies suggested and implemented to increase career development varied greatly. Inservice for teachers was recommended several times. Special units and/or courses aimed at specific career areas (e.g., physical education, child care) were also mentioned frequently. Two individuals mentioned funding and others mentioned needs assessment activities. Other strategies included awareness, emphasis, coordination, commitment, and referral to the experience-based career exploration course.

To expand the Elwood High School efforts in career education, several program improvement activities were suggested:

- Use more guest speakers and career films.
- Include career exploration units in existing courses.
- Conduct workshops for teachers on career planning.
- Provide funding for course revisions.
- Increase inservice time for this topic.

- Provide students with more orientation in the workplace, more with consumers, employers and employees.
- Make available more staff workshops.

Basic Skills. Three main program improvement strategies were found in response to the basic skills problem. These included: 1) additional funding, 2) remediation programs and 3) curriculum changes which require students to draw more heavily on basic skills.

Suggestions for funding did not always mention how the monies were to be spent. Additional staff was suggested several times, once alluding to lower grades "where learning can be effective." One teacher recommended funds for remediation activities. In regard to remediation, most comments referred to special labs and/or teachers. One mentioned coordination with the math department.

Course change strategies were varied. Some suggested adding more basic skill involvement in classroom activities. Others pressed for minimal basic skill requirements for successful course completion or promotion. Some just wanted more variety of activities and just plain more "emphasis" was also mentioned.

Self Employment. Two (out of ten) comments on self employment questioned the advisability or interest in self employment as a needed vocational curriculum focus. Other strategies were low level (e.g., "alert students to the many opportunities," "briefly point this out," and "introduced a new unit...") or informal ("have helped former students..."). Overall, the interest in teaching self-employment or entrepreneurship skills seemed to be

quite low. This was not perceived as a major concern for program improvement.

Inservice and Workshop Involvement

The questionnaire focused on teacher involvement in inservice sessions for each of five areas. Twenty individuals (including vocational and academic teachers, advisory committee members and administrative staff) responded to items fifteen and sixteen. Question 15 asked respondents to indicate the number of district-sponsored or locally-sponsored inservice sessions (e.g., workshops, institutes, etc.) in which they had participated over the past five years focusing on each of the five problem areas. Responses were tallied by giving face value to each number and a value of 10 was given to the response "more." The summary totals are as follows:

Comprehensive career development	41
Special needs students	76
Basic skills	65
Sex equity/stereotyping	41
Self employment	20

Using the same formula the following results were obtained for question 16 which read "Please circle the number of professional development activities outside of the district (e.g., conferences attended, graduate courses, etc.) in which you have participated over the past five years focusing on each of the five problem areas." The following summary totals were reported.

Comprehensive career development	80
Special needs students	57
Basic skills	54
Sex equity/stereotyping	42
Self employment	18

While actual scores varied somewhat between district- and out-of-district sponsored workshops, the ranking for the five areas based on these scores is essentially identical. It appears that the Elwood staff has devoted considerable professional development time to comprehensive career development, special needs students, and basic skills in recent years. The time spent in professional development in these areas has been equally spent in district-sponsored sessions and out-of-district sessions.

Levels of Communication

Effective staff interaction and communication is crucial to program improvement. Elwood teachers were asked to what extent they communicate with others in regard to the five issues of sex equity/stereotyping, special needs, career education, basic skills, and self employment. Twenty-five school staff responded to these items. Three response choices (none, some, a great deal) were given. A rough score for each area was obtained in the following manner. "None" responses were multiplied by zero (counted as no response). "Some" responses were multiplied by 1 (give face value) and "a great deal" responses were doubled.

The following ranking and scores were obtained:

Issue/Problem	Communication Score
Basic skills	198
Special Needs	160
Career Development	144
Sex equity/stereotyping	136
Self Employment	74

Basic skills received the highest communication score. Considering that basic skills was ranked first in importance and third in actual performance by the school, this result is not surprising. The high ranking of communication in the area of special needs is explained, in part, by the need to coordinate special needs programs for individual students. Moderate but still high levels of communication in the areas of career development and sex equity may be explained by the close relationship perceived between vocational education and these issues. The low level of communication in the area of self employment is consistent with low interest expressed in this issue.

APPENDIX A

DOCUMENTS USED FOR BACKGROUND DATA

(Note: Since full titles would divulge the true names of schools and communities, proper names of this sort are replaced by the pseudonym used in the text of this report.)

School Planning Documents:

1. Elwood Community School District #007 One and Five Year Plan for Vocational and Technical Education. 1978
2. Elwood Community School District #007 One and Five Year Plan for Vocational and Technical Education. 1979.

School Evaluation Documents:

1. North Central Association Report of Evaluation, Elwood High School, Elwood, State, 1969.
2. Evaluation Report, System of Statewide Evaluation of Occupational Education Programs, Elwood Community School District, 1978.

Miscellaneous School Documents:

1. Final Report for Demonstration Center for Comprehensive Occupational Education Program Planning, Elwood Community School District, 1973.

2. Position Available, Superintendent of Schools, Elwood Community School District, 1979.
3. The Elwood High School Newsletter, various issues.

Community Documents:

1. The Lacey County Land Use Plan, prepared by the Lacey County Planning Department, 1979.
2. Industrial Directory, Elwood, State, no date @1979.
3. The Lacey County Year Book, 1979.
4. Labor Area Trends (Lacey County) prepared by the State of (State) Department of Labor, 1979.
5. Interesting Information about Elwood, State, as compiled by the Greater Elwood Chamber of Commerce, no date, @1979.
6. Various issues of the Elwood Weekly Leader.

VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN WALKER:
A CASE STUDY

Table of Contents

Overview

Section I - The Community and Schools of Walker

Section II - Some Exemplary Vocational Education Programs

Experienced-Based Career Education

EBCE in Operation

Variety of Activities

Success in EBCE

Student Comments

Evaluation Information

Programs for Special Needs Learners

Typing Course for Low Achievers

Freshman Seminar Program

Other Programs and Supportive Services

Home Planning and Design Course

Program in Operation

Student Comments

Section III - School and Community Views of Program Improvement

Description of the Issues

Special Needs Students

Career Education

Sex Equity/Stereotyping

Self Employment

Basic Skills

The Questionnaire

Ranking of the Program Improvement Issues

Program Changes and Directions

Overview

The following narrative is designed to portray the observed impact of vocational education on a midwestern community. The data base of this narrative description comes from public and school documents, observer-recorded comments and a school/community survey. The narrative is presented in three parts. Part One provides a description of the community and schools. Part Two will focus specifically on three innovative vocational education programs operated by the schools. Curriculum descriptions as well as participant and community reactions to the programs are included. Finally, Part Three will look at the results of a school/community needs assessment survey related to vocational education and areas of program improvement needed in vocational education.

SECTION I: THE COMMUNITY AND SCHOOLS OF WALKER

Walker, the county seat of Gallo county, is located in the Northeastern section of a large midwestern state. Though the state is primarily rural, the majority of the employed residents of Walker work in one of the 350 manufacturing companies located in Gallo county. Though the size of the companies vary, twenty-five companies do employ from 500 to over 1,000 employees each. The type of industry varies as does the company size. Heavy industry is represented, for example, by a tractor manufacturing firm, an electrical company, and a metals manufacturer. Small industry, however, is found in the form of department and retail stores, a glass manufacturer, governmental agencies, foods industries, and other service oriented businesses, i.e., hotel/motel services, insurance companies, banks, etc.

The population of Walker is primarily white (87.7%) and protestant (79%). The median age is 27.3 years for males and 29.8 for females. Fifty-five percent of Walker's total population (slightly over 100,000) is between the ages of 18 and 64. Of those, 86.3% are employed within Gallo county. Approximately 35 percent of the households indicate an annual income of between $15,000-24,999. However, the median family income is less than $12,000.

Though the city is primarily reported as Protestant in denomination, over half of the cities schools and over 2/3 of its high schools as well as a four year college are all listed as Catholic supported. School enrollment records show that approximately 10,000 students are enrolled in the K-8 program with an annual

per pupil expenditure of slightly over $1,000. High school enrollments indicate nearly 7,000 students with per pupil expenditures of slightly less than $2,000.

Within Gallo county, a variety of technical and professional schools are also available to persons seeking specific vocational training. Such schools include an art design studio, several beauty schools, a court reporting academy, a nuclear reaction training school and a medical technology school. Beyond these opportunities there also exists CETA-supported training programs for the disadvantaged and the special needs persons. CETA training expenditures within the county exceed $300,000 dollars per year funding programs which range in service from career development pre-employment skills development to work training activities for participants.

Over five thousand students are listed as enrolled in the vocational education programs of Walker. A large array of vocational education programs are available to students in the following areas: business and agriculture, distributive occupations, health occupations, occupational home economics, office occupations, technical education, and industrial education. Statistics show that nearly 50% of the enrollment is found in the industrial education area. Faculty distribution reflects the percent student enrollment by subject with slightly less than fifty percent of the 115 vocational teachers employed in the industrial education area.

Demographic statistics indicate that over half of the vocational student enrollment is white. Of this group, 62% were males while the other ethnic groups showed only 54% as males. Less than 10%

of the students enrolled in vocational education are listed as handicapped. Of those, 25% were identified as retarded, another 25% visually impaired, and the remaining 50% were composed of persons which vary in type and severity of disability. In response to the service needs of this population, the Walker school district employs nine special education teachers within the vocational education program.

SECTION II: SOME EXEMPLARY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

The high schools and junior high schools in Walker operate a number of unique and innovative vocational programs. Over the past 15 years the schools in Walker have been extremely successful in obtaining special grant funds from the state department of vocational education, local businesses and industries, and CETA to develop new programs. In the mid-1970s, Walker was designated by the state department of vocational education as one of two communities in the state to serve as a "vocational education demonstration center." This designation attracted a large number of educators from within as well as outside of the state to Walker for the purpose of reviewing their different career and vocational education programs. Several administrators within the Walker schools system have an extensive background in vocational education and appear deeply committed to maintaining a comprehensive program which is responsive to changing employment/labor market needs and student interests.

In this section three programs are described which are extremely popular with the students, staff and parents. Several other programs could have been selected and described in this section. However, these three were selected for in-depth review and analysis after several discussions with high school students and teachers during the initial three days of interviews in Walker.

For each of the programs an overview of the program is presented, along with reflective comments from students and other evaluative information that has been collected to describe the effects of the programs.

Experienced-Based Career Education Program

Experienced Based Career Education (EBCE) is a program set up to supplement the classroom situation and expand the classroom into all areas of the community by providing students with a series of planned, personalized learning experiences in a wide variety of life/work settings. This program focuses on direct experiences in the community and enables students to explore numerous careers first hand. Through EBCE, students are to: learn about career awareness, develop academic skills, and develop/increase inquiry, problem solving and decison making skills that they will need to successfuliy operate in the world of work.

This particular EBCE program is an adaptation of the Far West Laboratory Model which has been developed, implemented, and evaluated with positive results on a nationwide basis. The proposal for this EBCE program was written in the Spring of 1976 and the program was implemented in the following fall semester.

The EBCE program is unique in that it is constructed to allow the students a role in shaping their education. It directs learning experiences towards real life situations, helping to develop personal and intellectual goals. It also helps students deal with responsibilities, decisions, and the pressures of everyday life through structured learning experiences.

Not only the students, but potential employers, staff, and all others involved with the EBCE program can potentially benefit from its use. EBCE attempts to make traditional teaching and learning methods more relevant. At the same time the program will allow employers to become part of the direct educational process thereby

helping to alleviate concerns commonly expressed by the business community about high school education programs. The EBCE program aims to prepare young people to enter college, seek employment or further training and mobilizes and utilizes a multitude of community resources.

In the EBCE program, students may learn how to plan both long-range goals and how they intend to accomplish more immediate goals and tasks. They also learn to become more self-reliant. The students set their own goals; plan their own activities; manage their time and other resources; work independently; learn how to recognize when they need help and how to seek it; evaluate their own behavior and learn from it; and accept the consequences of their own decisions and actions.

This program also allows students the opportunity to interact with adults as equals. They learn to communicate on an adult level, to make and keep realistic commitments, and have reasonable expectations of others. These students should be more able to make realistic and satisfying career choices by being better informed about career options and requirements and more aware of their own values, needs, goals, strengths and limitations.

Finally, the students in the EBCE program are encouraged to become more independent learners. They should be able to identify what is worth learning; to identify and use effective sources and methods of acquiring information; and to analyze, evaluate, and incorporate new information into their own knowledge and experience base.

EBCE in Operation. In this particular EBCE program, the students have the opportunity to explore many different careers ranging from the more traditional ones to the more non-traditional careers. As a part of the program, the students are encouraged to explore at least one non-traditional career and most students have found that these careers have proven to be very exciting. Some examples of non-traditional career opportunities are: 1) female veterinarian, 2) male elementary teacher, 3) women in managerial positions, 4) a male display director, 5) women in plant production, 6) male choreographer, and 7) women in construction.

Students are made aware of career opportunities in the related classroom instruction through the use of the library's career center, filmstrips, movies, and numerous fieldtrips. When the students find a career or occupational area which is of interest to them, they are given a career guide to look through and follow. This career guide consists of: the name, address, and person(s) in charge of a learning site; an explanation of the orientation and exploration/ investigation procedures; a list of suggested activities, and a list of related readings.

If, after an orientation to one career, the student shows a great amount of interest, he/she is given the opportunity to further pursue their exploration by working on a project in that particular area. Although a list of possible activities is given in the career guides, the student generally picks a project of personal interest, and submits the idea to the instructor. If the instructor approves it, the student is free to continue on that project.

These projects take a minimum of 20 hours of time and each student is required to complete at least one of these projects. Although required to put in only 20 hours, most of the students become so involved that they devote considerably more time. The students are not paid for their project work. Their projects are centered on experiences from learning, not from earning.

Varieties of Activities. The career opportunities and activities that a student is exposed to in the EBCE program are diverse and numerous. For example, one student: assisted T.V. cameramen film the Miss Illinois-Universe Pagent; trained Dobermans; learned about eye care; saw the horse business; visited lawyers; learned about bridge-tending; checked out careers with the Armed Forces Recruiters; found out how oil is refined from a major oil company; learned about emergency medical treatment at a local fire department; heard information about cancer at the American Cancer Society; found out about social work; watched a murder trial and civil suit in court; learned about banking; investigated the career of a travel agent; experienced the atmosphere of industry; underwent group hypnosis; saw health careers at local hospitals; heard some juveniles from the area probation department; investigated management; and previewed becoming a parent through a registered nurse. This may sound astounding, but that student did all of the above in just one year of involvement in the EBCE program.

Success in EBCE. Another student learned commercial art techniques such as lettering, layout and color separation at his learning site. His products included a Winter Olympics poster and a flyer for distribution within the company. When asked about the

EBCE program, this student's resource person commented; "From my experience with various educational programs, my opinion is that EBCE is one of the best. Students receive a first-hand look at what the work-a-day world is really like. If just one student per company is helped to decide what field to follow, this is worth our expense and time."

Other students implemented a multi-faceted campaign to educate other students to the dangers of smoking. These EBCE students had no prior experience in setting up and running a campaign of this sort before they entered the program. By the time the school year was over, an estimated 2000 students (4th grade - freshman) had been exposed to the anti-smoking campaign. One of the students who worked on this project also shared the knowledge he had gained through this anti-smoking campaign with others through a 20 minute live panel show on a local radio station. According to this student, overcoming shyness was a spinoff of the project. "Otherwise I wouldn't be here doing this right now," he commented on the air.

EBCE is for both non-college-bound students as well as for college-bound students. Another student pursuing a college prep program was interested in accounting and engineering. When asked why he joined EBCE, he replied, "Because it sounded different and also offered me experiences that will help me in the future, as this is one of my biggest concerns."

Students also have the opportunity to explore possible careers and change their mind as to whether or not they would enjoy this career after working at it. For example, one student stated:

"While I was in EBCE I thought I would like drafting. I did a project in drafting and found I did not enjoy being confined to a drawing board. I would not have known this otherwise." This student went on to a junior college majoring in marketing and plans to finish her degree at a four-year institution.

One other student went through a hospital orientation during EBCE which led directly into a full-time job at a local hospital.

Student Comments. The EBCE program is talked of very highly by students who are currently, and who have previously, participated in the program. Student comments about the EBCE program and experiences include:

> "EBCE helped me learn to set goals for myself. Dealing with businessmen led me to know what business people expect, and this has been very useful in interviewing."
>
> "Increased confidence was a big benefit of EBCE. I got the confidence to secure a job with resource person, Dr. A., veterinarian, and that led directly into my present plans."
>
> "I accomplished more than I really expected at the onset."
>
> "I can communicate with adults much better. I also learned to plan wisely and my interests and goals in life have changed."
>
> "Even though I could have taken a course in summer school and graduated (early), I chose not to. Because I was not sure of what I wanted to do after

high school, I decided (to stay in school) and join EBCE."

"EBCE means that I have a chance to really find out what I want to do the rest of my life. It helps me to manage my time and to be independent. It lets me experience what I think I would like so I can really find out if I do like it. EBCE is the most worthwhile class have been in."

Evaluation Information. The school at which this EBCE program is being run had a follow-up study done by a third party evaluator. A few of the findings of this evaluation included:

- The students find EBCE more enjoyable than regular classroom instruction.
- The students feel more comfortable with adults after EBCE.
- EBCE taught students how to plan. They had not had these skills previously.
- EBCE increased knowledge of career seeking and career holding skills.
- Students with strong career interests have benefitted from the EBCE program because it strengthened their feelings toward their job.
- Gives the students a chance to interact with community members to find out what type of education is needed to

perform a particular job.

- Helps students set educational goals.
- EBCE students found out why they need to take certain courses such as English and discovered why these courses were beneficial.

A proposal is now being considered to increase the EBCE program to cover 9th through 12th grades. During the first year, through freshmen seminars (an orientation course required of all freshmen), all students will be exposed to the EBCE program and learn what can be gained from this program. By the time each student has finished his/her high school career, he/she will have had the opportunity to actively participate in the EBCE program.

Programs for Special Needs Learners

A number of very successful programs were developed for handicapped and disadvantaged students. These programs focused on providing job and related skills for several different types of special needs students.

Typing Course for Low Achievers. One of these programs was a typing course for low achievers. This course began a year ago when the typing instructors found that their beginning typing class was too large. Many of the students needed special attention, and with the class being so large, it made it nearly impossible to serve all these students' needs adequately.

In this typing course, there are three major goals which were set up by the instructors. These included:

1) To familiarize the students with the typewriter keyboard.
2) To teach students how to manipulate the keyboard.
3) To acquaint students with the procedures used in typing.

Students are referred to the program by their teachers, counselors, and/or deans. The type of student who qualifies for this program include: the visually impaired, hearing impaired, and students with missing fingers, emotional disorders, severe reading difficulties, coordination problems, and excessive absenteeism problems.

The major difference between the basic typing course and the regular first year course is that the assignments and vocabulary used in the basic course have been simplified. The course content, performance objectives, and standards are the same as in the regular class, but the students receive .8 credits for the basic course as opposed to one (1) credit given in the regular course.

Among other activities, the students learn how to type business letters; type resumes; basic skills such as centering their work; and "art typing." Testing for this course is done in a variety of ways. For example, different tests covering the same material are made up to fit the needs of visually impaired as well as students with severe reading difficulties.

The students who have participated have benefitted greatly from this program, including a visually impaired student who enjoyed the course so much that she has continued on in this area at a local junior college. She was aided in the basic typing course by the use of a special book stand and a large-print edition of the

textbook. Another student secured a position at a major department store with the skills acquired through the basic typing course. A number of other special needs students that did well have taken the regular typing course and also have taken the business machines course and have done well in both of these according to one of the instructors.

The implementation of this course has decreased much of the tension that used to exist in the regular typing class. The students in both classes now receive more individual attention. Students in both classes are able to proceed at their own rate.

Freshman Seminar Program. Another program to improve occupational education for handicapped and disadvantaged students is the freshman seminar program. This program was designed to acquaint freshman students with high school, and to help them find out more about themselves. All freshman students, including special needs students, participate in this 25 minute session each day for the entire school year. A multi-media approach is used, including faculty and community resource people, movies, tapes, filmstrips, simulation games, role playing, and printed materials. Although this multi-media approach is particularly effective with handicapped and/or disadvantaged students, it also works very well with all students according to the guidance counselors and regular classroom teachers who operate the program.

Before the freshman seminar program was implemented, all freshman students had a 25 minute lunch period either followed or preceded by a 25 minute study hall. The guidance department requested this time and the freshman seminar was born. There are

planned activities two or three times a week and on the other days, students have an opportunity for a study period, use of the media center, or visit the career resource center.

The freshman seminar started out being primarily presentations by the various departments within the high school, but soon expanded to include presentations from clubs and organizations, motivational materials, outside speakers, and career exploration. Information concerning sex role stereotyping is also presented. The seminar instructors try to encourage students to explore areas without considering the careers as being a "male" or "female" job.

The future plans for this seminar consist of expanding it to cover a wider array of areas and interests. Currently a proposal is being submitted to modify the seminar to include some group counseling and guidance.

Along with the freshman seminar, a bibliography was developed of materials on motivation, development of self, examination of sex roles, and clarifying values for careers.

Other Programs and Supportive Services. Among the other programs and supportive services that have been developed for special needs students are:

- A basic electricity/electronics trouble-shooting course for students with reading problems.
- A series of pamphlets providing information to the regular teacher in dealing with students with special needs. The topics covered in these pamphlets include: hearing impairment, learning disabilities, withdrawn students, vision problems, and aggression.

- Career exploration learning packages and career booklets for educationally mentally handicapped/educationally handicapped sophomores.
- Individual performance checklists which consist of daily living and vocational skills for trainable mentally handicapped students.
- Personalized peer tutoring for reading (at the 9th grade level).

Another unique development has been the opportunity for administrators, counselors, and librarians to work together on career guidance in the Career Center. This allows librarians to work directly with the handicapped and disadvantaged students.

Home Planning and Design Course

The Home Planning and Design Course combines course content from the home economics and trade and industry programs in a unique manner. This first year program is a two semester course for students seeking background in the areas of: drafting, design, financing, furnishing, and decorating a home. All students, sophomore through senior, are allowed to enroll in this course.

The students in this course alternate between home economics and drafting in nine week intervals. During the drafting portion, the students design and draw a typical family residence while the home economics department offers students information from the consumer's standpoint of buying and decorating the home.

The idea for this course was "born" in an architecture class where the instructor observed that although there were few females in the class, the work they produced showed more originality. The problem confronting the instructor was, "How can we get more females interested in the drafting classes?" The prerequisites for the architectural drafting courses include "Introduction to Drafting" which is a two semester course.

The drafting instructor discussed the idea of combining home economics and trade and industry with the home economics instructor. The combined course was set up with the following objectives in mind:

1) To bring female students into trade and industry and male students into home economics.
2) To give students a look at the family home through the eyes of a future homemaker rather than through the technical curriculum offered through the vocational drafting classes.
3) To increase student interest in planning and decorating the residence constructed by the building trades program.
4) To satisfy the Illinois Consumer Education requirement.
5) To give basic instruction in interior design.
6) To expose the students with no previous drafting experience (but that have a career interest in drafting, engineering, or architecture) to home design and decorating.

The proposal for the course was approved and gained strong support from both the faculty and the administration. The course was then promoted through "mini-talks" in English classes. In these talks, the instructors explained the course in general to the students and gave them a one page course description. The instructors had planned to limit the class size to twenty-five students, but so many students expressed an interest that two sections as opposed to the original one, were set up.

The home planning and design course drew from a wide background of student abilities. There were students from both the highest and lowest academic ranking as well as from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds.

Program in Operation. Many different activities occurred in the first year of the course to determine which ones wold be the most useful and practical for the students. Among these were:

- Field trips to various local businesses to look at flooring, bricks, cabinets, light fixtures, furniture, etc.
- Practical experiences such as actually measuring things in the building trades house to develop a sense of size and area.
- Hands-on experiences such as wall papering, painting, installing cabinets, etc.
- Making interior room presentation boards.

Through the latter activity, three of the female students enrolled became interested in the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA) competition for interior design. None of the students had had any previous experience in drafting or interior

design, but the Home Planning and Design course had stimulated their interest in it. One of these students finished in third place in a state-wide architectural drafting competition. This student said that she probably could have done better, but was somewhat lacking in the area of electrical outlay. The instructors took this information and have attempted to strengthen the background of students in this area.

Student Comments. For the most part, all the students in this course are very enthusiastic about it. They find it interesting, exciting, and enjoyable. The following comments are typical:

> "I signed up mainly for the interior design part, but I am really enjoying the drafting area. It's nice to know you created something you can be proud of."
>
> "I would recommend it to other students. If I wasn't a senior, I would go to other design and architecture courses."
>
> And finally, "It gave us an opportunity for practical hands-on experiences and a chance to explore some of our other interests."

The overall success of this first year program has continued to stimulate student interest and seems as though it will in the future. The class enrollment for next year has been held to twenty-five students to allow the instructors the opportunity to strengthen the course. The instructors have already located and eliminated many of the weak areas and have strengthened the strong ones, in hopes of keeping the interest and enthusiasm up.

SECTION III: SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY VIEWS OF PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

As attitudes and economic situations change, vocational education must respond to meet the changing needs of society. Many of the issues and problems to which local programs such as Walker must respond are national in scope. Project IMPACT was designed to examine how communities and local programs view such issues and to gain a better understanding of how local school district staff respond to these changes. Five issues or problems, which are described below, were isolated for purposes of the case study.

Special Needs Students

Public Law 94-142 and the recent Amendments to the Vocational Education Act have mandated increased attention and educational opportunities for handicapped and disadvantaged students in all public education including vocational education. As an extension of the civil rights movement, students with special needs are entitled to receive an individually-designed educational program. In addition, whenever possible they are to be educated in regular vocational education classes.

Career Education

Career education was initiated in the early 1970's in an effort to make more students aware of career options while they were in school. Providing students at all grade levels with career awareness and exploration activities is an integral part of the career education concept. Programs and concepts such as Experience-Based

Career Education provide students with work experiences and short internships in a variety of professional, technical, and related occupations.

Sex Equity/Stereotyping

Traditionally, vocational education has been characterized by heavy enrollments by one sex in traditional role content areas. Industrial occupations and agriculture have been traditionally male curricula. Home economic students have been overwhelmingly female in enrollments. Business occupations have been less involved in these problems. Recent political and social concerns revolving around differential pay and employment opportunities have resulted in increased concern over the school's role in this area. The recent Education Amendments of 1976 focused extensively on the need to eliminate and/or reduce sex bias and sex role stereotyping.

Self Employment

Many of the skills taught in vocational education courses are those used in small, privately-owned businesses (e.g., repair shops, bakeries, etc.). Once established, these small concerns are able to hire additional workers, thereby creating jobs for others as well as for the owner/operator. Thus, small businesses provide vocational education with the means of increasing its impact on the economy of communities. The training of entrepreneurs as a strategy for increasing economic productivity is receiving greater and greater attention among some vocational educators. This issue has not received much attention from federal and local levels at this time.

Basic Skills

Reading, writing and computational skills are seen as essential to job success by many people. These skills are usually provided in academic and general education courses. Vocational education courses rely on these skills, and to a limited degree, also teach these skills. Presently, there is some concern that vocational students lose the opportunity to obtain these basic skills as they acquire job skills in vocational programs.

The Questionnaire

Two questionnaires were developed and field-tested to assess the perceptions of community members and school personnel in Walker toward these five issue areas. One hundred fifty (150) questionnaires were distributed throughout the high school and 109 responses were obtained (72% response rate) which included: 62 vocational teachers, 21 academic teachers, and 26 others. The latter category consisted of principals, School Board or advisory council members, counselors, and administrators.

Fifty (50) questionnaires were distributed in the community by the district's cooperative vocational education coordinators. A total of 33 questionnaires were returned for a 66% response rate.

Telephone follow-up calls were made to those individuals who did not respond within two weeks following the deadline.

Ranking of the Program Improvement Issues

The initial questions on the instrument focused on determining how important the 5 issues were perceived by the school personnel and community members and how they thought their school district

actually addressed these issues. The community members' perceptions were based on data obtained from identical questions.

The community members ranked the issues in the following manner with the first (basic skills) being the most important: basic skills, comprehensive career development, sex equity/ stereotyping, special needs, and self employment. They felt these issues were presently being addressed by the schools in Walker in the following order: sex equity/stereotyping, special needs, comprehensive career development, basic skills, and self employment.

There appeared to be a major discrepancy in the views of the community respondents relative to basic skills and vocational education. They indicated that improving the basic skills of graduates was a critical need at this time which was not being addressed by the vocational education program. Community members perceived the schools addressing basic skills as fourth in importance.

In general, the 109 Walker school personnel responding rated improving basic skills and sex equity as the two most important issues for vocational education. They felt that, to date, the school district's vocational programs had responded most positively in the areas of sex equity, special needs, and basic skills.

School personnel also expressed a critical need for additional funding. To continue improving the vocational education programs in Walker, additional funds are needed to up-date equipment, and provide additional staff and newe[illegible]ilities. Other program improvement issues mentioned frequently by school personnel in-

cluded: developing a closer working relationship among departments, developing more community involvement with vocational education, increasing public awareness of vocational education, and keeping up with changes in business and industry.

Program Changes and Directions

On the questionnaire school personnel were asked to identify specific changes (e.g., course revisions, increased staff, etc.) that they felt were essential to increasing the role of the Walker vocational programs in each of the five areas.

In the area of sex equity/stereotyping the two most frequently listed proposed changes were course revisions and assistance/support from guidance counselors. Other needed changes that were mentioned included: more staff inservice training, new textbook materials, and increased awareness on the part of staff and parents.

Relative to serving special needs students, increased funding and increased staff were the two most frequently mentioned changes needed. In terms of providing comprehensive career development, revising courses, increasing funding, and increasing staff were viewed as needed changes. It was also suggested that all students should be required to take a "careers" course. The need for designated administrative leadership for and coordination of the District's diverse career education programs was also mentioned as a critical need by some school personnel.

Increased funding and course revision were cited most frequently as changes needed in the area of basic skills instruction. A minimum competency testing program was suggested as a needed

program improvement by several individuals. Small class size, more staff development activities, and improved coordination of remedial programs were also cited as needed changes.

Relative to teaching self-employment or entrepreneurship skills, most of the school personnel felt that very little was being done in this area because of a lack of knowledge regarding its role and lack of available materials.

School personnel in Walker appear to have been extensively involved in efforts to improve their vocational education programs. A high percentage of the staff participate in inservice workshops held within the district as well as workshops and conferences held outside of the district. There appears to be extensive communication among staff members regarding improving and expanding the vocational programs, especially in the areas of improving basic skills and serving special needs students.

In recent years several members of the staff have been actively engaged in strengthening, updating, and improving their programs. Teachers report revising curriculum and counseling materials to remove sex bias and stereotypes. When appropriate, special in-school and community-based programs for special needs students have been developed. More instructional emphasis related to basic skills in vocational classes, and coordination between math, reading, and vocational instructors has been noted. These are just a few of the recent changes and developments noted in discussions with staff.

The intense interest of the school personnel and the administration in continuing to evaluate their vocational programs and

actively look for ways to improve them is highly commendable. In Walker the commitment to continuously and rigorously monitor, improve, and expand vocational education offerings has been a major ingredient in the overall positive image and effects of the program.

APPENDIX A

School District Questionnaire

SCHOOL DISTRICT QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please circle an appropriate response for each item.

A. My role in the district is:

a. Teacher
b. Principal
c. Board or Advisory Committee member
d. Counselor
e. Administrator. Title? _____

B. Sex M F

C. Age _____

D. Number of years experience in your current role (item #A)

1-3 4-6 7-9 10-12 13-15 16-18 17-21 22+

E. If you are a teacher, list courses currently teaching.

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____

1. How important do you think it is to provide equal opportunity for males and females to participate in each vocational education program?

NOT IMPORTANT MODERATELY IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. How do you rate your school district in actually providing equal opportunity for females and males to participate in each educational program?

POOR AVERAGE EXCELLENT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. How important do you think it is to provide appropriate opportunities for handicapped, disadvantaged, and limited English speaking students to participate, to the maximum extent possible, in regular vocational education programs?

NOT IMPORTANT MODERATELY IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. How do you rate your school district in actually providing appropriate opportunities for handicapped, disadvantaged, and limited English speaking students to participate, to the maximum extent possible, in regular vocational education programs?

POOR			AVERAGE			EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

5. How important do you think it is to provide students with a sequence of courses and experiences (in Kindergarten thru adult education) that help students become aware of, explore and prepare for a broad range of career options and give students the decision making skills needed to make an effective transition from school to work?

NOT IMPORTANT			MODERATELY IMPORTANT			VERY IMPORTANT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

6. How do you rate your school district in providing students with a sequence of courses and experiences (in Kindergarten thru adult education) that help students become aware of, explore, and prepare for a broad range of career options and give students the decision making skills needed to make an effective transition from school to work?

POOR			AVERAGE			EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

7. How important do you think it is to provide students with the essential reading, math, communication, and occupational survival skills that are crucial to securing and maintaining a job?

NOT IMPORTANT			MODERATELY IMPORTANT			VERY IMPORTANT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. How do you rate your school district in actually providing students with the essential reading, math, communication, and occupational survival skills that are crucial to securing and maintaining a job?

POOR			AVERAGE			EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

9. How important do you think it is to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to establish and operate their own business?

NOT IMPORTANT			MODERATELY IMPORTANT			VERY IMPORTANT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

10. How do you rate your school district in actually providing students with the skills and knowledges needed to establish and operate their business?

POOR			AVERAGE			EXCELLENT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

11. Do you feel there are more important issues/problems other than those described above for your school district's vocational education program to address?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If Yes, please briefly describe these issues or problems: _____

_____

_____

12. Several factors outside of education will likely influence the schools' impact on each of the five problem areas. Factors such as employment rates, parent and employer attitudes, etc. have to be considered. In light of other factors, what degree do you believe that vocational education can have a significant impact on these kinds of problem areas in your school district?

NO IMPACT			MODERATE IMPACT			SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. To what extent have you communicated with others regarding possible changes in your program for each of the areas of concern?

	Amount of Communication		
	None	Some	A great deal
a. Sex equity/stereotyping			
Guidance counselors	1	2	3
Local employers	1	2	3
Parents	1	2	3
Other vocational teachers	1	2	3
Administrators	1	2	3
University staff	1	2	3
State department consultants	1	2	3
Others, please describe:			
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
b. Special needs students			
Guidance counselors	1	2	3
Special education staff	1	2	3
Bilingual staff	1	2	3
Parents	1	2	3
Local employers	1	2	3
Other vocational teachers	1	2	3
Administrators	1	2	3
University staff	1	2	3
State department consultants	1	2	3
Others, please describe:			
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
c. Comprehensive career development services			
Elementary/junior high teachers	1	2	3
Guidance counselors	1	2	3
Community college instructors	1	2	3
Other vocational teachers	1	2	3
Parents	1	2	3
Local employers	1	2	3
Administrators	1	2	3
University staff			
State department consultants	1	2	3
Others, please describe:			
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3

	Amount of Communication		
	None	Some	A great deal
d. Basic skills:			
Academic teachers (math, reading)	1	2	3
Elementary/junior high teachers	1	2	3
Guidance counselors	1	2	3
Community college instructor	1	2	3
Other vocational teachers	1	2	3
Parents	1	2	3
Local employers	1	2	3
Administrators	1	2	3
University staff	1	2	3
State department consultants	1	2	3
Others, please describe:			
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3
e. Self-employment			
Guidance counselors	1	2	3
Community college instructor	1	2	3
Other vocational teachers	1	2	3
Parents	1	2	3
Local employers	1	2	3
Administrators	1	2	3
University staff	1	2	3
State department consultants	1	2	3
Others, please describe:			
_____	1	2	3
_____	1	2	3

14. For each of the problem areas below, please list 2-3 specific changes (e.g. course revisions, increased staff, more funding, etc.) that you feel benefit your efforts at addressing this area?

a. Sex equity/stereotyping:

_____

_____

b. Special needs students:

_____

_____

c. Comprehensive career development:

_____

_____

d. Basic skills:

_____

_____

e. Self-employment:

_____

_____

15. In the spaces below, please describe any efforts you have made to address your efforts in each of the areas identified below. This would include such things as: mini-grants to develop or revise instructional materials, trips to review other programs, development of new courses, etc.

a. Sex equity/stereotyping:

_____

_____

b. Special needs students:

_____

_____

c. Comprehensive career development:

_____

_____

d. Basic skills:

_____

_____

e. Self-employment:

_____

_____

16. Please circle the number of district-sponsored or locally-sponsored in-service sessions (e.g. workshops, institutes, etc.) in which you have participated over the past five years focusing on each of the five problem areas:

Sex equity/stereotyping	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More
Special needs students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More
Comprehensive career development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More
Basic skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More
Self-employment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More

17. Please circle the number of professional development activities outside of the district (e.g., conferences attended, graduate courses, etc.) in which you have participated over the past five years focusing on each of the five problem areas:

Sex equity/stereotyping	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More
Special needs students	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More
Comprehensive career development	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More
Basic skills	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More
Self-employment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	More

APPENDIX B

Community Questionnaire

COMMUNITY QUESTIONNAIRE

DIRECTIONS: Please circle an appropriate response for each item.

A. My relationship with the local school district is:

1. Student Grade? _____
2. Parent Ages of children? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
3. Other Describe _____

B. Sex: M F C. Age: _____

D. Number of years in your community:

1-3 4-6 7-9 10-12 13-15 16-18 19-21 22+

1. How important do you think it is to provide equal opportunity for males and females to participate in each vocational education program?

NOT IMPORTANT MODERATELY IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. How do you rate your school district in actually providing equal opportunity for females and males to participate in each vocational education program?

POOR AVERAGE EXCELLENT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. How important do you think it is to provide appropriate opportunities for handicapped, disadvantaged, and limited English speaking students to participate, to the maximum extent possible, in regular vocational education programs?

NOT IMPORTANT MODERATELY IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. How do you rate your school district in actually providing appropriate opportunities for handicapped, disadvantaged, and limited English speaking students to participate, to the maximum extent possible, in regular vocational education programs?

POOR AVERAGE EXCELLENT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. How important do you think it is to provide students with a sequence of courses and experiences (in Kindergarten thru adult education) that help students become aware of, explore and prepare for a broad range of career options and give students the decision making skills needed to make an effective transition from school to work?

NOT IMPORTANT MODERATELY IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. How do you rate your school district in providing students with a sequence of courses and experiences (in Kindergarten thru adult education) that help students become aware of, explore, and prepare for a broad range of career options and give students the decision making skills needed to make an effective transition from school to work?

POOR AVERAGE EXCELLENT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. How important do you think it is to provide students with the essential reading, math, communication, and occupational survival skills that are crucial to securing and maintaining a job?

NOT IMPORTANT MODERATELY IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. How do you rate your school district in actually providing students with the essential reading, math, communication, and occupational survival skills that are crucial to securing and maintaining a job?

POOR AVERAGE EXCELLENT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. How important do you think it is to provide students with the skills and knowledge needed to establish and operate their own business?

NOT IMPORTANT MODERATELY IMPORTANT VERY IMPORTANT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. How do you rate your school district in actually providing students with the skills and knowledges needed to establish and operate their business?

POOR AVERAGE EXCELLENT

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. Do you feel there are more important issues/problems other than those described above for your school district's vocational education program to address?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If Yes, please briefly describe these issues or problems: _____

_____

_____

12. Several factors outside of education will likely influence the schools' impact on each of the five problem areas. Factors such as employment rates, parent and employer attitudes, etc. have to be considered. In light of other factors, what degree do you believe that vocational education can have a significant impact on these kinds of problem areas in your school district?

NO IMPACT		MODERATE IMPACT			SIGNIFICANT IMPACT	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7